DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 425 339 CE 077 718

AUTHOR	D'Amico, Deborah
TITLE	Adult Education and Welfare to Work Initiatives: A Review of Research, Practice and Policy. Literacy Leader Fellowship Program Reports, Volume III, Number 1.
INSTITUTION	National Inst. for Literacy, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1997-08-00
NOTE	88p.; For other reports in this mongraphic series, , see ED 400 426, ED 402 444, and CE 077 717-721.
AVAILABLE FROM	ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398; Tel: 877-433-7827 (Toll Free); Web site: http://www.nifl.gov/susanc/inthome.htm
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Information Analyses (070)
JOURNAL CIT	Literacy Leader Fellowship Program Reports; v3 n1 Aug 1997
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; Adult Programs; Agency Role; Demonstration Programs; Economically Disadvantaged; *Job Training; *Literacy Education; Literature Reviews; Program Effectiveness; *Role of Education; *Welfare Recipients; *Welfare Services
IDENTIFIERS	*Welfare to Work Programs

ABSTRACT

This review attempts to clarify adult education's role in moving individuals from welfare to work. Part 1 reviews research on this role, job prospects for low-skilled workers, and literacy requirements of workplaces. Part 1 reports these findings: the likelihood of being on welfare goes up as literacy goes down; a labor force attachment approach produces larger earnings gains and welfare savings than a human capital investment approach; adult education programs cannot provide evidence of effectiveness in helping adults achieve higher literacy; and states must develop educational and labor market opportunities that sustain and reward lifelong learning to support public assistance recipients in finding permanent employment at wages that can sustain families. Part 2 features models of program practice and discusses collaboration between adult education providers and agencies administering welfare reform and finds diversity and innovation in addressing the multiple needs of different groups within the public assistance population are important; if the goal is self sufficiency and personal success, investments are costly and long term and require education tailored to participants' goals and needs; if the goal is welfare budget savings, cheaper, short-term programs resulting in employment but no change in participants' lives are sufficient; and support staff and services should be added to accommodate welfare recipients who need literacy instruction. Part 3 makes program level, policy, support services, job creation, and research recommendations. A glossary of acronyms is appended. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 425 339

National Institute for Literacy

Literacy Leader Fellowship Program Reports

Volume III
Number 1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
● Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Adult Education and Welfare to Work Initiatives: A Review of Research, Practice and Policy

Deborah D'Amico, PhD
Literacy Leader Fellow 1997-98

CE077718

ADULT EDUCATION AND WELFARE TO WORK INITIATIVES: A REVIEW OF RESEARCH, PRACTICE AND POLICY

by
Deborah D'Amico, PhD
153 Stuyvesant Road
Teaneck, N.J. 07666
201-833-1801

August 1997

This study was prepared under a fellowship from the National Institute for Literacy.

The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the National Institute for Literacy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements and Dedication ii

Executive Summary iii

Introduction 1

PART ONE: ADULT EDUCATION AND MOVING FROM WELFARE TO WORK: WHAT WE KNOW

I. Literacy, Welfare and Employment: Major Findings 3
Supporting Research: Literacy and Employment 5
II. Studies of Welfare to Work Initiatives 8
Adult Education in Welfare to Work Programs prior to JOBS 8
Studies of Statewide JOBS Programs 13
Small Scale Studies and Participant Experiences 17
III. Public Assistance Recipients and the Current Labor Market 24
IV. Literacy at Work 30
References 36

PART TWO: ADULT EDUCATION AND WELFARE TO WORK INITIATIVES: WHAT WE DO

I. Program Models 41
California GAIN 41
Brooklyn College BEGIN Work Study 44
Philadelphia Community Women's Education Project 47
Project MATCH 48
America Works 49
The Center for Employment Training 50
References 52
II. Adult Education Programs and Welfare to Work Partnerships 53
JOBS Partnerships 54
The Future of Adult Education and Welfare Reform Partnerships 59
References 61

PART THREE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Program Level Recommendations 62
Policy Recommendations 63

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS 71

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank:

the National Institute for Literacy for supporting the research that produced this report. In particular, Program Officer Meg Young was tireless in her efforts to accommodate my work and to facilitate valuable interchange between myself, other NIFL fellows and NIFL staff.

Janet Quint, Cristina DiMeo, and the other 1996-97 NIFL Fellows, who helped to stimulate my thinking through their own fine work and their valuable comments and suggestions.

My colleagues in the New York City and New Jersey literacy communities, especially the Literacy Assistance Center and Paul Jurmo and the New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning, for providing opportunities to share my research.

My new husband, J.J. Johnson, and my daughter, Janina Samuels, for their love and support during a year of both profound challenges and new happiness.

Dedication

This report is dedicated to all adult learners on public assistance who struggle to continue their education while preparing for work or working at low wages or workfare assignments;
To partnerships among education and social service providers that support the efforts of these students;
and to the memory of Aron Akilov, a New York City English as a Second Language student who committed suicide, in part over his despair at the difficulty of combining workfare with participation in an intensive English language program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ADULT EDUCATION AND WELFARE TO WORK INITIATIVES: WHAT WE KNOW

Summary of Research Findings:

- According to the National Adult Literacy Survey, the likelihood of being on welfare goes up as literacy goes down; conversely, the number of weeks worked during the year, average weekly wage and annual income all rise with literacy levels. *The conclusion drawn from the statistics that support these relationships is that "Welfare dependency may be reduced in two ways: by increasing the literacy levels of the general population, to reduce the risk of falling into dependency and by raising literacy levels of those already on welfare to help them become more financially self-sufficient (Barton and Jenkins, 1995:8)."*

- Despite this strong connection between literacy and employment, low cost job search work experience programs (a labor force attachment approach) produced larger earnings gains and welfare savings than programs that emphasized higher cost components, such as education and training (a human capital investment approach). However, these gains do not usually result in higher incomes for public assistance recipients or improved prospects for long term self sufficiency.

- There is thus a policy trade off among the following goals:
  - Producing more substantial earnings gains for some;
  - Maximizing welfare savings;
  - Reducing long term dependency.

- P*roviding mandatory job search will maximize welfare savings and job holding, but by itself usually will not get people better paying jobs or benefit the most disadvantaged. Providing higher cost more intensive services to a selected population can get people jobs with somewhat higher earnings, but will produce lower welfare savings per dollar invested.*

- Although higher levels of literacy are linked to labor market success, adult education programs cannot provide convincing evidence of their effectiveness in helping adults achieve higher literacy. Research shows that :
  - Students spend too little time in such programs to make progress;
  - Literacy programs do not have a consistent vision of goals or what they should be teaching;
  - Literacy instruction is severely underfunded, providing about $258 for each adult who needs literacy instruction;
  - As a result, the field has evolved without full-time, professional teachers (80% of literacy instructors are part-time) and without the means to systematically document outcomes (Stein, 1997: 4);

- For many, progress in literacy is long-term and is not captured by studies that focus on yearly outcomes.

- *The design of welfare to work programs, and research that evaluates them, tends to isolate outcomes of welfare to work programs from the context of participants lives.* The perspective of the participants, in contrast, emphasizes the web of obstacles that stand between participants and work. These include mental and physical health problems, lack of child care, transportation issues and for some, discrimination by race and gender in the workplace. While the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills program (JOBS) succeeded in providing adult education for many public assistance recipients, a more holistic approach to *the combination of factors* faced by individuals is necessary.

- The characteristics of the low wage job market in the United States, particularly in urban areas with large minority populations, limit opportunities for long term self sufficiency and result in cycling between low wage jobs and public assistance.

- Inflating the credentials required for work creates another barrier to employment for many low skilled public assistance recipients. Ethnographic studies of workplaces and some workplace literacy programs show that reliance on paper and pencil testing and academic credentials can exclude workers who would perform well from employment.

- Because of credential inflation, the characteristics of low wage jobs, and the lack of access to affordable child care and health care in the U.S., single mothers on public assistance may need postsecondary education in order to achieve long term self-sufficiency.

- Given these findings, states need to develop both educational and labor market opportunities that sustain and reward lifelong learning for adults, in order to support public assistance recipients in their struggle for permanent employment at wages that can sustain families.

We need longer term studies of the impact of adult education on welfare to work initiatives, and we need to better understand the complex dynamics of education variables as they intersect with other obstacles to employment. Individuals on public assistance may need more education, or differently structured programs with different curricula, than those tried in the past. Adult education providers and practitioners must better articulate program goals and better demonstrate program outcomes. *Despite these shortcomings in our knowledge about and our evidence for the importance of adult education, it remains the welfare to work strategy most clearly linked to long term employment impacts. Moreover, even for individuals who succeed at getting jobs, education remains central to the ability to advance on the job and to lift oneself above the ranks of the working poor.*

ADULT EDUCATION AND WELFARE TO WORK INITIATIVES: WHAT WE DO

- Shared attributes of successful programs identified in a U.S. Department of Education study of JOBS education programs include "a clear concept of the educational and other needs of welfare recipients, support to teachers' ongoing efforts to innovate and experiment in the classroom and adequate funding to put innovative ideas into practice (Quint, Forthcoming, viii)."
    - Promising practices shared by these programs include: *A well-defined mission; Separate classes specifically for JOBS students; Skilled, experienced teachers; An emphasis on staff development; Varied instructional approaches that involve active learning; Frequent communication about students' progress between educators and JOBS program staff; A stress on regular attendance, with aggressive follow-up for absences; Relatively intensive class schedules; A high degree of teacher-student and student-student interaction.* (viii-ix)

- A review of successful program models for meeting the educational needs of public assistance recipients suggests the importance of diversity and innovation in addressing the multiple needs of different groups within the public assistance population:
    - *For individuals who want to work immediately, programs such as America Works can provide the links to employers willing to hire those who have demonstrated entry level skills and work readiness.*
    - *For those with very low skill levels, programs such as the Center for Employment Training offer a way to bypass traditional credential and test score requirements and enter directly into a work-like environment that provides training linked to jobs.*
    - *Public assistance recipients who need education and/or training can receive it in a variety of innovative combinations through programs such as California's Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Vocational Adult Basic Education classes, or the BEGIN program in New York City.*
    - *For those not ready for education programs or work, Chicago's Project Match structures activities that increasingly demand and reward work-like skills and dispositions, and that constitute the lower rungs of an incremental ladder leading to education, training and work.*
    - *The experience of the Community Women's Education Project in Philadelphia demonstrates that conflicting goals of adult educators and other service providers can be discussed and renegotiated to provide greater educational options for participants.*

Taken together, these programs demonstrate that adult education programs can and should offer many paths to work and to higher education opportunities for public assistance recipients.

- If the goal is self-sufficiency and personal success for recipients, investments will be costly and long term, and will require education tailored to personal goals and needs of participants. On the other hand, if the goal is to produce savings in the AFDC budget, cheaper, short term programs that result in some employment but no real change in participant lives will achieve desired results. *For adult educators, the dilemma is how and whether to participate in initiatives directed toward the latter strategy, while maintaining a personal and programmatic commitment to the former.*

- The profile of adults on public assistance who need literacy instruction suggests that programs may need to add support staff and services to accommodate this population, and that curricula be adjusted to include more life management, parenting and employment skills (Pauly and DiMeo 1995: 11-13).

- Funding is a "prime mover" that affects the capacity of education programs to serve welfare recipients and that strongly shapes welfare/education collaboration (Pauly and DiMeo, 33).

For basic skills to achieve a higher profile in welfare reform in all States, it will be necessary to identify successful program models-both stand alone and integrated programs. "Success" must be defined as reaching prescribed benchmarks - including meeting qualifying criteria to advance along the path to employment and/or securing actual placements in jobs - and must be backed by accurate data in sufficiently large numbers to make the case. These models will have to represent urban, suburban and rural populations, as well as programs for recipients with disabilities and those needing English language instruction. *These models will need to be showcased at national, regional, state and local technical assistance meeting to reinforce the message that education remains a vital factor in welfare to work policy* (Murphy, 1997).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The participation and impact outcomes of studies of welfare to work initiatives involving education demonstrate the ability of government to design and carry out large scale programmatic changes that achieve targeted goals. What is critical is how those goals are defined and decided, and whether the short and long term consequences of such choices are fully understood. The major source of conflict between educators and social service agencies charged with implementing welfare reform has been the support of educators for human capital development approaches, and for education that encompasses much more than preparation for entry level jobs.

Program Level Recommendations

Based on the research reported above, adult education programs and providers can:

- Identify goals with their participants on public assistance and with social service agencies charged with implementing welfare reform, to clarify how they can fit into local and statewide welfare reform, community development and workforce development initiatives. Programs need to decide how they can best serve the population in their classes and how and whether to be part of a system that can support, augment or follow their services.

- If programs are to really serve the complex range of individual needs and goals that exists among public assistance recipients, cooperation needs to move to the level of team based service provision, using mechanisms such as case conferences to plan for the mix of services needed by individuals and/or groups of learners.

- Based on discussions with participants and staff within programs, and with other agencies, programs must identify changes in assessment, evaluation, curriculum, scheduling and staffing that would help them better serve the needs of public assistance recipients.

- Programs and practitioners should join with others who share their goals to lobby for increased resources to effectively serve those on public assistance, and for changes in policy that will facilitate such services.

Policy Recommendations

Education and Training:

- Policy makers must recognize the diversity of the welfare population, and the variety of approaches and time frames necessary to achieve self-sufficiency. This diversity includes those who have disabilities and a level of personal, family, physical and mental health problems that will not be addressed by purely educational or short term solutions.

- Public assistance recipients who lack basic skills and would like to attend education and training programs full time should be encouraged to do so, and the programs they attend should feature a variety of ways to prepare for work.

- Policy makers can best support the employment of those who lack basic skills and/or a GED by:
  1. Including hours of attendance in ESL, GED and ABE classes in the number of hours participants are required to work.
  2. Scheduling and locating additional work assignments so that they do not interfere with an individual's ability to continue in the education program they have chosen.
  3. Allowing those education sites that would like to be worksites to design work activities for students that reinforce and correspond to their developing literacy and/or English language skills.
  4. Supporting participation in education with payment of training related expenses, such as lunch, carfare and child care costs.
  5. Recognizing that time limits on participation in education can be counterproductive to both individuals who are close to achieving a credential with a demonstrated labor market payoff, such as a postsecondary certificate or degree and to those who have low literacy and English language skills and lack GEDs. Flexibility and the opportunity to obtain individual waivers under terms agreed to by educators and social service agencies should be encouraged.

- Both policy, practice and interagency linkages should encourage participants to reach the highest levels of education they seek.

- Given the relatively poor record of labor market outcomes for training, as opposed to education, training programs should make use of the pedagogies and practices developed by educators and be linked to systems of comprehensive training and education. These systems would provide individuals with a variety of options for combining work and education, whether concurrently or sequentially.

- Policy makers can support the creation of comprehensive, accessible and affordable training and education systems by fostering direction and funding at the federal level of government, creating infrastructural support at the state level, and providing mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation at the local level.

- As stakeholders in workforce development and regional development form closer linkages to address issues of education and employment, mechanisms for tying labor market returns to educational investments need to be identified. Ways of holding employers accountable for public and private investment in a more literate and skilled workforce are necessary if training and education systems are to succeed.

Essential to the operation and conceptualization of statewide training and education systems are two fundamental perspectives: 1) Policy design and implementation must include the participation of both service providers and public assistance recipients; and 2) Public Assistance recipients are not, for the most part, different from the working population, particularly the working poor. *What all workers and would-be workers need are opportunities for jobs at living wages and for education that helps them to advance as far as their aspirations and abilities will take them.*

Support Services

- Access to quality day care and health care is absolutely essential for the single mothers and their children who comprise the majority of recipients of AFDC.

Job Creation

- Without at least some job creation, the welfare reform initiative is doomed to fail, and to disappoint and impoverish the thousands of individuals who faithfully execute the required steps toward employment and never find jobs. The resulting waste of human talent, effort and public investment is unacceptable from the standpoint of economic development. Job creation can position individuals to rebuild the infrastructure of cities, to assist struggling families, and to meet other critical social and economic needs. Job creation could provide clear outcomes for work experience program participants and direct their workfare into job training for real jobs.

Research

In order to support the formation of effective education and training systems and to ensure that such systems have the capacity to serve individuals at the program level, researchers need to develop data and theory at two levels.

- We need to understand the development, operation and outcomes of successful workforce development and training and education systems at regional and state levels. How do such systems achieve active participation among stakeholders, facilitate the identification of shared goals, and function to operationalize these goals? What resources and incentives on the part of state and federal government encourage the development of such systems? How do local level agencies become part of state, regional and community development and workforce education and training systems, as full partners?

- We need program level studies that use ethnographic and qualitative methods to capture the ways in which program philosophy, goals, curricula, structure, class scheduling and teacher pay, benefits and staff development, operate to achieve desired outcomes.

Given the context of growing income and wage inequality, and the nature and limit of entry level job opportunities, education constitutes the last best hope for individuals on public assistance who lack basic literacy, English language skills or a GED. Adult education has been historically under funded and overlooked, but its practitioners have demonstrated remarkable resilience and renewed commitment to their constituents as welfare reform has unfolded. The field will need both additional resources and many partners as it responds to the Personal Responsibility Act. The learners in its programs will need flexible interpretations of state and federal guidelines as they seek education to attain employment. They will need to have an increased voice in the policy that dramatically affects their lives and plans, and many allies to support them as they contend with persistent obstacles to their success. Such individuals have made and continue to make enormous changes in their own lives. It is up to all of us to make the changes in education and training, in economic and political policies, and in human values that will support their efforts.

ADULT EDUCATION AND WELFARE TO WORK INITIATIVES: A REVIEW OF RESEARCH, PRACTICE AND POLICY

Perhaps never before has the need for literacy among adults been so urgent and so embroiled in controversies over policy, practice and power. Changes in the U.S. economy, in national political values, and in the kinds of jobs available and what they require have created a context that pushes individuals who need literacy to acquire it as quickly as possible. This urgency is based on an assumed linear relationship between literacy and employment, and on a need for quick solutions to problems surrounding welfare reform. As a result, literacy programs find themselves at the eye of the storm raging around the transition from welfare to work.

Our position is made more difficult by the lack of consensus among us about what literacy is, how learners acquire it, and how we know when they do. Chronic problems within adult education, such as student retention, attendance, and documentation of program outcomes, make participation in welfare reform efforts particularly difficult. Political and philosophical differences among administrators, practitioners, funders and learners are evident in our passionate responses to what welfare reform has asked of adult education programs.

This review attempts to clarify the role of adult education in moving individuals from welfare to work. It situates the findings of studies that examine the impact of adult education on large groups of public assistance recipients within the lives of learners, the economic context in which they seek work, and the workplaces in which they practice their literacy skills. When we view the dilemma of welfare recipients who need literacy instruction in this holistic way, we can better understand what literacy does and does not mean to them, what it can and can't be expected to accomplish in their lives. In programmatic terms, we understand the full range of services and external conditions necessary to support the transition to work for these individuals. We can then join with other organizations to create and provide such services, and/or advocate for what we need to increase opportunities for adult learners.

Just as a holistic view of the lives of public assistance recipients, and one informed by their voices and perspectives, is essential for service providers, a systemic view of workforce development and of regional and national labor markets is critical for policymakers. To maximize both family self-sufficiency and the skills and knowledge of the workforce, adults need continuous access to free or affordable training and education programs that span literacy instruction, technical training and professional degree programs. The implementation of welfare reform, viewed as part of such a system, would also emphasize mechanisms and institutions for creating a labor market that rewards investment in education and training. This would balance the efforts of educators, service providers and public assistance recipients to bolster and improve the supply of job seekers, on the one hand, with policies that ensure demand for workers in the form of adequate numbers of jobs at wages that support families, on the other.

If we adopt a holistic view of both learners who are public assistance recipients and the economies in which they seek work, how will our definition of literacy and our methods for achieving it change? Will we continue to approach adult literacy as a remedy for past school failure, or take up the challenge to prepare adults for the future they envision? Equipped for the Future, a National Institute for Literacy Initiative, has sought to develop a customer driven agenda for adult education that responds to the imperative of National Education Goal 6:

> ***By the year 2000, every adult will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.***

If literacy means having the skills and knowledge to compete in a global economy and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, what does this definition mean for adult education? Equipped for the Future researchers asked adult learners all over the country what it means to compete in the global economy, how they define the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and what knowledge and skills they need to fulfill these responsibilities. Four purposes for literacy emerged:

- **ACCESS: to information so adults can orient themselves in the world;**
- **VOICE: to be able to express ideas and opinions that will be heard and taken into account;**
- **INDEPENDENT ACTION: to be able to solve problems and make decisions on one's own;**
- **BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE: learning how to learn so adults can keep up with the world as it changes.**

Each of these purposes, in turn, was elaborated by learners in role maps for their lives as parents/family members, citizens/community members and workers (Stein, 1997).

Literacy thus defined encompasses much more than getting a job or reading and writing enough to fill out an application. Yet, the kinds of job skills employers seek are clearly contained within these purposes. So is the ability to participate in shaping the future for oneself, one's family and one's community. The challenge for adult education is to fulfill these aspirations of learners within constraints imposed by their own funding, by the contexts of learners' lives and now, by the parameters of welfare reform. As we rise to this challenge, our past experiences should inform both our responses to existing conditions and our efforts to change these.

In this spirit, what follows reviews research on the role of adult education in welfare reform, on the current job prospects for low skilled workers, and on the literacy requirements of workplaces. The second part of the report features promising models of program practice and discusses collaboration between adult education providers and agencies administering welfare reform. The study concludes with recommendations for programs, policy and future research.

PART ONE: ADULT EDUCATION AND MOVING FROM WELFARE TO WORK: WHAT WE KNOW

I. LITERACY, WELFARE and EMPLOYMENT: MAJOR FINDINGS

1. According to the National Adult Literacy Survey, the likelihood of being on welfare goes up as literacy goes down; conversely, the number of weeks worked during the year, average weekly wage and annual income all rise with literacy levels. *The conclusion drawn from the statistics that support these relationships is that "Welfare dependency may be reduced in two ways: by increasing the literacy levels of the general population, to reduce the risk of falling into dependency and by raising literacy levels of those already on welfare to help them become more financially self-sufficient (Barton and Jenkins, 1995:8)."*

2. Despite this strong connection between literacy and employment, low cost job search work experience programs (a labor force attachment approach) produced larger earnings gains and welfare savings than programs that emphasized higher cost components, such as education and training (a human capital investment approach). However, these gains do not usually result in higher incomes for public assistance recipients or improved prospects for long term self sufficiency.

3. There is thus a policy trade off among the following goals:

- Producing more substantial earnings gains for some;
- Maximizing welfare savings;
- Reducing long term dependency.

P*roviding mandatory job search will maximize welfare savings and job holding, but by itself usually will not get people better paying jobs or benefit the most disadvantaged. Providing higher cost more intensive services to a selected population can get people jobs with somewhat higher earnings, but will produce lower welfare savings per dollar invested.*

4. Although higher levels of literacy are linked to labor market success, adult education programs cannot provide convincing evidence of their effectiveness in helping adults achieve higher literacy. Research shows that :

- Students spend too little time in such programs to make progress;
- Literacy programs do not have a consistent vision of goals or what they should be teaching;
- Literacy instruction is severely underfunded, providing about $258 for each adult who needs literacy instruction;
- As a result, the field has evolved without full-time, professional teachers (80% of literacy instructors are part-time) and without the means to systematically document outcomes;
- For many, progress in literacy is long-term and is not captured by studies that focus on yearly outcomes (Stein, 1997:4).

5. *The design of welfare to work programs, and research that evaluates them, tends to isolate outcomes of welfare to work programs from the context of participants lives.* The perspective of the participants, in contrast, emphasizes the web of obstacles that stand between participants and work. These include mental and physical health problems, lack of child care, transportation issues and for some, discrimination by race and gender in the workplace. While the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills program (JOBS) succeeded in providing adult education for many public assistance recipients, a more holistic approach to *the combination of factors* faced by individuals is necessary.

6. The characteristics of the low wage job market in the United States, particularly in urban areas with large minority populations, limit opportunities for long term self sufficiency and result in cycling between low wage jobs and public assistance.

7. Inflating the credentials required for work creates another barrier to employment for many low skilled public assistance recipients. Ethnographic studies of workplaces and some workplace literacy programs show that reliance on paper and pencil testing and academic credentials can exclude workers who would perform well from employment.

8. Because of credential inflation, the characteristics of low wage jobs and the lack of access to affordable child care and health care, single mothers on public assistance may need postsecondary education in order to achieve long term self-sufficiency.

9. Given these findings, states need to develop both educational and labor market opportunities that sustain and reward lifelong learning for adults, in order to support public assistance recipients in their struggle for permanent employment at wages that can sustain families.

10. We need longer term studies of the impact of adult education on welfare to work initiatives, we may need to better understand the complex dynamics of education variables as they intersect with other obstacles to employment. Individuals on public assistance may need more education, or differently structured programs with different curricula, than those tried in the past. Adult education providers and practitioners definitely need to better articulate program goals and better demonstrate program outcomes. *Despite these shortcomings in our knowledge about and our evidence for the importance of adult education, it remains the welfare to work strategy most clearly linked to long term employment impacts. Moreover, even for individuals who succeed at getting jobs, education remains central to the ability to advance on the job and to lift oneself above the ranks of the working poor.*

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

> Most of us aren't criminals or out to defraud the system," said Fran Coleman, 32, a welfare recipient who has alternated between menial jobs and welfare for the last 13 years. "I have no problem working, but the skills I have are not enough. People talk like being on assistance is just sitting back and waiting for your check," she said. "We all want a better life, but a job at MacDonald's isn't going to take care of my three kids" (quoted in Rabinovitz, 1995:B1).
>
> And if you really care about ending welfare dependency, you have to reckon with this fact: according to the Welfare Law Center report, 63 percent of women who receive welfare for five years or more lack a high school education. By contrast, women with a high school degree or its equivalent account for two-thirds of the people who receive AFDC for two years or less (Dionne, 1996: A11).

I. LITERACY AND EMPLOYMENT

The beliefs of individuals on pulbic assistance and the findings of researchers concur on the importance of literacy and education in the effort to move public assistance recipients from welfare to work. ***The likelihood of being on welfare goes up as literacy goes down; conversely, the number of weeks worked during the year, average weekly wage and annual income all rise with literacy levels.*** The conclusion drawn from the statistics that support these relationships is that "Welfare dependency may be reduced in two ways: by increasing the literacy levels of the general population, to reduce the risk of falling into dependency and by raising literacy levels of those already on welfare to help them become more financially self-sufficient (Barton and Jenkins, 1995:8)."

Data from the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) establish that "levels of literacy and degrees of success in the labor market are clearly and closely linked (Barton and Jenkins, 1995:8)." Critical literacy skills, measured as prose, document and quantitative literacy of the kind that adults need "to function in society, achieve one's goals and develop one's knowledge and potential" (9) are weak in a very large proportion of the welfare population. Approximately half the food stamp recipients and 45% of recipients of AFDC and/or other forms of public assistance had not graduated from high school, nearly twice the percentage of dropouts nationwide (47). From one third to almost one half of welfare recipients perform only at the lowest level of literacy, while another third perform at the second to lowest level (4). This establishes the literacy of welfare recipients below the level of the least skilled workers. Such individuals may get work, but their earnings will not keep them out of poverty and their employment future remains precarious.

Statistics linking education to success in the labor market extend beyond numbers linking literacy to work. Among dislocated workers in New York City, for example, Menzi and Huang found that level of education determines workers' risk of dislocation as well as their ability to secure employment and to recover lost earning power. Reemployment rates for those with less than 12 years of schooling was 35%, compared to 76% for those with advanced degrees. Nationally, re-employed workers with a high school diploma or less experienced a sharp drop in earnings ranging from $10-50 per week. In contrast, college graduates who found new jobs earned significantly more than their previous salaries (Menzi and Huang, 1993). In a national study of labor market returns to two and four year college attendance, Kane and Rouse found that the average two and four year college student earned roughly 5-7% more than high school graduates for every year of credits completed (1993:1).

Due to this strong and unequivocal relationship between education and earnings, adult education is a key component of welfare to work initiatives. The programmatic results, however, do not present such clear correlations. For example, the NALS data also show that assigning welfare recipients to adult basic education programs appears to have little measurable effects on raising literacy proficiencies.

This is due in part, to the problem within adult education of documenting outcomes and student progress. Studies on the effectiveness of adult education trace this problem to the following conditions:

- Adult students do not stay in programs long enough to make progress. Median retention rates across adult education programs are less than 60 hours per learner, and 35 hours for native English speakers with the lowest skill levels.
- Programs do not have a consistent vision of instructional content and goals. Instead, they feature school-based subject matter and a remedial approach, rather than materials and pedagogy focused on what adults want and need.
- Program staff is 80% part-time, and 60% of programs have no full time staff. Part time staff are paid only for the hours they teach, and do not have the opportunity to fully serve learners or to keep up with new developments in the field.
- Programs are severely underfunded, with an average of $258 allocated nationally for each adult who needs literacy services. Consequently, few programs have the staff and resources to document outcomes (Stein, 1997:4).
- Many of the achieved outcomes of adult education go unrecorded because we lack appropriate measures for capturing such outcomes, or because more expensive, qualitative and longitudinal studies are needed to understand the varied impacts of adult education over time.

Finally, among welfare participants in education or literacy training, higher literacy proficiencies alone may or may not lead to higher earnings (7). Rather, the NALS policy report on Literacy and Dependency concludes that:

"Increasing the incomes of welfare recipients is likely to require job development and placement, child care, and other services in addition to education and literacy training. It is difficult to separate impacts of these various program components (8)."

II. STUDIES OF WELFARE TO WORK INITIATIVES

> Welfare was destined to help people for a short period of time, but it has become a way of life. It's a bad way of life because being on welfare hurts you more than it helps you. Welfare is not enough to live on, especially for those who had worked before going on welfare and have accrued a lot of bills, such as credit card bills, mortgages and car insurance . . . . We want to be free and off of public assistance and able to live our lives the way we want to (Students of a New York City welfare to work program, quoted in HANAC BEGIN Students, 1995:10).

The students quoted above express the hopes of all stakeholders in welfare reform; the question is, how are these hopes best realized? My purpose here is to summarize the findings of specific studies of welfare to work efforts that have involved education and training, or that have targeted recipients with low literacy or English language fluency levels. I focus particularly on research that reviews such programs over time or over a number of sites. This ensures broad coverage of the impact of education and training efforts on welfare recipients. I attempt to balance these with data from smaller studies that focus on individuals and their experiences in education, training and welfare to work programs.

Most of the large scale reviews of welfare to work initiatives were conducted by MDRC (Manpower Development Research Corporation), under contract to federal agencies. Important to understanding the findings of these studies is the methodology used to measure program impacts. Impacts such as reductions in AFDC receipt, or participant earnings, employment and income are measured against corresponding data for a control group of recipients similar in all important respects except the critical one: they did not receive the services being evaluated.

Adult Education in Welfare to Work Programs prior to JOBS

To inform the implementation of the 1988 Family Support Act, in particular its JOBS (Job Opportunities and Basic Skills) program, MDRC (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation) summarized past research on similar programs (Gueron and Pauly, 1991):

- **Almost all programs reviewed, high cost (generally emphasizing more intensive services, such as education and training) and low (primarily focused on job search assistance), mandatory and voluntary, led to earnings gains that were sustained for at least 3 years after program enrollment.**

- **Broad coverage programs that began with mandatory job search activities increased both employment and earnings, but usually did not get people into jobs that paid well enough to substantially change their income.**

- **Selective, voluntary programs that cost more and offered more intensive services appeared to get people jobs with somewhat higher earnings but did not make a consistent difference in the proportion of people employed (26-29).**
- **Employment and earnings impacts did not occur in weak labor markets or where resources were too low to provide employment directed assistance.**
- **Measured in terms of impact per dollar, low cost job search work experience programs produced larger earnings gains and welfare savings than programs that emphasized higher cost components. This poses a policy trade off among the following goals: producing more substantial earnings gains for some, maximizing welfare savings, or reducing long term dependency (34-5). Providing mandatory job search will maximize welfare savings and job holding, but by itself usually will not get people better paying jobs or benefit the most disadvantaged. Providing higher cost more intensive services to a selected population can get people jobs with somewhat higher earnings, but will produce lower welfare savings per dollar invested. Thus, policymakers need to identify goals and specify the population for whom such goals are projected.**

These results raise two important issues for educators:

- If we support long term, more costly investment that pays off in long term employability at higher wages, how do we find common ground or intersecting interests with those whose primary goal is cost savings?
- "Although there is a great deal of research . . .showing that those with higher education levels have higher earnings, there is very little evidence on the key cause and effect question-will the expansion of educational activities for welfare recipients help them leave welfare? (40)" In other words, although education is linked with higher earnings and more stable employment, we lack evidence that adult education programs improve employment prospects for participants on public assistance. How can we know or demonstrate this? What programmatic changes need to be made to support employment as an objective, and/or to facilitate coordination with other service providers involved in welfare to work efforts?

Long Term Impacts

The findings of a five year follow up study of programs in four states by Friedlander and Burtless (1995) provide additional, though indirect, questions for educators. The four programs assessed provide some basis for comparison of different program goals, approaches and costs with regard to education as part of a welfare to work strategy:

- **Programs in all four states were effective and cost efficient, with gains in enrollee earnings exceeded program costs. Reductions in AFDC receipt were also large enough to offset program costs.**

- **However, the programs were generally not successful in helping enrollees find better paying jobs or jobs offering long term security of employment. In two of the four sites, earnings produced little or no impact on income of participants.**

- **The Baltimore program, whose enrollees found better paying jobs also had the longest lasting impact on total earnings and resulted in a clear improvement in the financial position of the employed participants. This program was characterized by more generous training and education services, but it did not result in large savings for the government, and most of the earnings gains went to a small number of participants.**

- **All four programs had limited success in reducing the number of recipients who face long spells of unemployment and consequent AFDC payments (1995:2-3).**

- **Across all four programs, earnings gains increase as net costs of programs rise; participant incomes gained most where government budgets gained least, again suggesting a trade off among these impacts (10).**

Baltimore's program maximized participant choices, offered the most education and training and set a goal of helping participants obtain better jobs, even if this meant a longer time spent in education and training programs. This program achieved more than twice the fifth year earnings impacts of any of the other programs, constituting "a major program achievement (18)."

In the other programs, impact on earnings and AFDC reductions was generated by increases in time employed mainly because the initial period of joblessness, relative to control groups, was shorter. Once employed, however, participants in programs that emphasized job search first did not remain employed longer than those in control groups, nor was there any significant improvement in job quality (22-24). In the Baltimore program, in contrast, the most persistent earnings impact was associated with improved earnings, possibly the result of skill enhancement, rather than with more rapid job finding.

Employment rates among control groups and those in the welfare to work programs became similar over time, and the programs did not markedly affect AFDC recidivism (27). The authors point out that impacts are reduced by the fact that many individuals experience relatively short periods of AFDC receipt while others spend years on public assistance. The greatest potential for achieving long term impacts is thus to affect the AFDC receipt of the latter group. Impacts for others are reduced by "control group catch up", or by comparison with recipients who, like themselves, would have been only short term recipients to begin with (30).

The programs were least successful in achieving the conversion of long future spells of joblessness and AFDC receipt into steady employment and sustained self-sufficiency. They caution that the relative success of the Baltimore approach might be due to the individual assessment and greater choice of activities it offered to participants, its education and training activities, the nationally recognized management abilities of its provider agency or some combination of these factors (33).

Friedman and Burtless make a useful distinction between the majority of recipients who receive AFDC for relatively short periods, and the smaller group who will be without work and on public assistance for years. They use this distinction to define three objectives for welfare to work programs. The first two apply to individuals who would likely find jobs and leave public assistance on their own within a few years : 1) a program may shorten the amount of time between AFDC receipt and employment by speeding up initial job finding; 2) a program may aim to increase the earnings of individuals once they start to work, by increasing wage rates, number of hours worked and duration of employment. 3) To serve the minority of individuals who face lengthy spells of unemployment and AFDC receipt, a program may aim at stable employment at income levels higher than public assistance provides (191-2). Educators are likely to aim at the final goal for all recipients.

Cycling between short term AFDC receipt and unstable employment at low wages represents no significant change or reform in public assistance outcomes. Rather, these impacts are evidence of an economy that offers poor incentives to public assistance recipients who want to work. Accordingly, Friedman and Burtless also discuss policies for rewarding work that lie outside the realm of the behavior of individuals, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and passage of a national health insurance plan.

The welfare to work programs reviewed in this study helped individuals find employment but did "give them a leg up to better paying jobs (199)." Consequently, they did not "alter the calculus by which AFDC parents must choose to support their families with income from either welfare or work." Nor did they provide this choice to long term recipients who are more likely to lack basic literacy than others and to have difficulty finding employment even when the labor market provides opportunities. Education and training might be expected to improve the employment prospects of both populations. Thus, the authors conclude that ***"the greatest potential payoff for program development in the near future lies in research into the effectiveness of more intensive education and training coupled with more intensive monitoring and enforcement of program participation requirements and provisions of supports and incentives that will foster compliance (207).***

Program Example: California's Greater Avenues for Independence

In their 1994 study of GAIN, California's Greater Avenues for Independence program, Martinson and Friedlander examine the basic education component of this large scale welfare to work effort launched in 1985. GAIN emphasized basic education because "many welfare recipients - notably long-term recipients, who account for the bulk of welfare spending - have inadequate educational backgrounds and basic skills for obtaining and keeping jobs, especially jobs sufficiently well paying to enable them to leave welfare (v)."

Education services received by GAIN participants included GED, ESL and ABE (Adult Basic Education) instruction, and were provided through county wide networks of education programs. The established infrastructure of adult education in California facilitated implementation and coordination with existing literacy programs. California's adult education system is the largest in the United States; it serves fully one third of all adults in basic education in the country and accounts for 19% of total national expenditure on adult education (39). In most cases, the welfare and education systems already in place established a viable referral system that served GAIN participants. San Diego county, however, established a separate and new system for public assistance recipients, through a collaboration between the GAIN program, the Private Industry Councils and local school districts. The result was a network of 21 specialized Learning Centers (40).

The amount of instruction varied by county and provider. Most providers offered instruction from 12-20 hours per week, three to four hours a day, four to five days a week. San Diego mandated 27 hours per week.

Like other programs that incorporate education as a strategy for moving from welfare to work, GAIN's results confirm the success of large scale government efforts to enroll public assistance recipients in education programs (xviii). Fifty eight percent of GAIN registrants needed basic education and were referred to a program; 71percent of these attended such a program. Those who participated received an average of eight months of classes. However, participants were in class for only about 60% of scheduled hours (xviii-xix).

The study measured both *educational attainment*, in the form of a GED, high school diploma, or other credential; and *educational achievement,* indicated by an increase in scores on standardized tests of literacy and mathematical skills:

- **Statistically significant numbers of participants received GEDs in four of the five counties and there was a smaller increase in the fifth county. Not surprisingly, those who attained GEDs were the most literate when they entered GAIN.**
- **Only one county produced large and statistically significant impact as measured in improved scores on the Test of Applied Literacy Skills (TALS). Basic skills increases were concentrated among those who entered with higher scores.**
- **In the counties that had strong impacts on GED and basic literacy, education programs geared specifically for welfare recipients were credited.**

- **The GAIN program in the short run did not produce employment and earnings impacts for those in basic education classes; however, results for a small group of participants that extend data to three years suggest a possible impact beginning after the second year of follow up and increasing into the third.**

Instruction at GAIN learning centers was a mix of whole class teaching, small group work, individualized assignments and computer assisted instruction. Materials included published texts as well as teacher developed or student generated materials. With the exception of San Diego, there was no consistent emphasis on employment related or life skills content (43). San Diego's program also differed in its greater use of computers and its hiring of a new teaching staff for the GAIN program (43-45).

The authors conclude that the content and organization of education services in GAIN may be as important as the amount of instruction received in increasing achievement and attainment. Almare and Tulare counties, which achieved striking impacts on GED attainment, offered close monitoring and counseling and encouraged students to move from ABE to GED classes. No other county produced achievements in basic education that rivaled San Diego's, which offered more intensive, closely monitored services tailored to the specific needs of GAIN participants (139-140).

Regarding the failure of participants with low literacy scores on entry to demonstrate achievement, the authors caution that achievements at the lower levels may not be detected by an instrument such as TALS, but also suggest that the amount and type of education received by these participants may have been inappropriate or insufficient. Basic education and other skill building activities intentionally postpone employment in favor of increasing the ability of participants to find and hold jobs with higher wages and long term potential. A typical pattern of impacts begins with a small or even negative impact on earnings and AFDC savings, during and immediately following the participation period. This initial "investment phase" should be followed by a period of increasing impacts until finally, the impact of basic education on earnings and AFDC might begin to exceed those of immediate job entry activities. In welfare to work programs, this period may take five years from the point of program registration (135-6).

Studies of Statewide JOBS Programs

The JOBS program mandated basic education services for public assistance recipients who were assessed as needing basic skills. While there is as yet no long term study of JOBS, Freedman and Friedlander conducted a two year comparison of two broad categories of approaches to moving individuals from welfare to work: 1) the labor force attachment approach, which emphasizes immediate job placement and strategies in support of these; and 2) the human capital development approach, which stresses investment in education and training before job placement, primarily for those without a high school diploma.

In their 1995 evaluation of JOBS, Freedman and Friedlander examined program impacts at three sites. Each site successfully implemented and carried out the requisite programs.

- **Outcomes for the labor force attachment approach at all three sites were relatively large impacts on AFDC receipt, AFDC payments, employment rates and earnings. However, while the JOBS effort produced welfare savings, there was no significant gain in measured income of participants.**

This conclusion echoes those of previous studies. Programs are able to achieve AFDC payment reductions generated by: sanctions for non-participation; participants who increase the share of their income received through earnings; and by increased and more rapid employment of participants (Executive Summary). This is testimony to the capability of both the administering agencies and the public assistance recipients who participate. It also indicates the efficacy of government efforts to craft and implement policy.

Educators would predict greater success over time for the human capital development approach. Freedman and Friedlander found some evidence that this approach was beginning to pay off at the end of the two year period, and recommended a five year follow up to revisit the questions this raises about longer term impact.

Preliminary findings on the impact of the human capital development approach are:

- **Sixteen percent of those who participated received an education credential, compared to 10.8 percent of controls. Seven percent of those who received such credentials attained their GEDs; the figure for the control group was less than 3% (41). (Strictly speaking, this comparison is between the group who received known education services and the control group, who may or may not have accessed such services on their own).**

- **The 14% reduction in AFDC payments to this group, while less than the 22% found for the participants in the labor force attachment approach, " is large, and at the high end of achievements from welfare to work programs evaluated during the 1980s, which provided primarily job search assistance (ES7)."**

Among those who received labor force attachment services:

- **The greatest increase in earnings and AFDC reductions were among those with high school diplomas; those without high school diplomas showed both smaller impact on employment and less employment in year two, suggesting diminishing returns for this group (31-32).**

- **While those with high school diplomas broke even in terms of income, although they experienced a statistically significant loss of health care benefits, overall those who**

participated primarily in job search activities experienced a statistically significant reduction in total measured income relative to the control group (32).

In contrast, one of the interesting findings among the human capital development approach participants is that more high school drop outs were working at the end of year two than among drop outs in the labor force attachment group while, paradoxically, no impacts were demonstrated by high school graduates or GED recipients. ***Indeed, most of the program impact of the human capital development approach on participation in education and training occurred among high school drop outs, and this group continued to increase employment and earnings in the last month of the study, suggesting ongoing impact (51-2).*** This is important because it shows an impact not measurable in attainment of an education credential that nonetheless demonstrates a possible effect of instruction in basic education.

This evaluation raises two important concerns that resound through most evaluations of large scale welfare to work efforts. Participants do not, by and large, acquire full time jobs at wages that can support families. This means they continue to receive public assistance, albeit less of it, and that they are likely to cycle, as has long been characteristic of the majority on public assistance, between low paid, unstable wage work and welfare.

The second question raised by the evaluation of JOBS is how investment in education and training should be measured, or, perhaps more importantly, when. As the authors point out, the human capital development approach was not intended to show an immediate payoff in AFDC reduction or increased earnings or employment; rather, it may raise costs initially. Accordingly, this approach produced a modest increase in GED or high school diploma receipt, but no significant earnings impact. AFDC reductions were smaller than for the labor force attachment approach.

While this evaluation does not provide definitive evidence that supports greater investment in education and training, it neither proves that such investment is wasted. Indeed, it suggests that among the hardest to employ, those without education credentials, participation in basic education may enhance employment, earnings and AFDC reductions. Moreover, it calls for evaluation of the impact of education over a longer period of time.

Adult Education Programs and JOBS

The most recent, comprehensive review of the role of adult education for people on AFDC is the JOBS evaluation produced by MDRC in 1995 (Pauly and DiMeo). This study examines the available knowledge about adult basic education (including ESL, ABE and GED instruction) for adults who receive AFDC. The literature reviewed includes 18 impact evaluation studies of welfare to work programs that utilize education services.

Findings on participation again emphasize the success of JOBS in delivering education services to large numbers of targeted participants, and the reliance of this success on existing adult education programs funded through the Adult Education Act. JOBS programs attended by welfare recipients were found to vary in their content, scheduling and support services, and also in the supply of ESL instruction and in services for diagnosing and serving people with learning disabilities.

- **Attendance and completion were problematic across programs.** Those who exit programs before completion often include over 40% of those enrolled; attendance ranges from 50-75 %, which appears to be similar to rates for adult learners not on AFDC. However, AFDC recipients enrolled in adult education programs receive substantially more hours of service than others; the average for all adult education programs was 58 hours, while those in programs tied to welfare to work received 100-200 more hours of instruction (ES-2).

- **The education related characteristics of people on AFDC included low reading and math achievement levels, family problems, a need for child care and transportation to facilitate attendance, and a higher incidence of clinical depression.** Although participants tend to see adult education as helpful to their employment, they express a preference for other activities such as job skills training or assisted job search that are seen as more directly linked to a job (ES-3).

- **Data on program impact is considerably more mixed than that on participation and delivery of services.** There were significant positive impacts on GED attainment, but programs still left large numbers of participants without this credential. Two programs achieved positive impacts on reading and math skills. The need for reliable measures of achievements at low literacy levels remains a methodological problem.

- **The relationship between adult education in welfare to work programs and economic impacts, such as employment, earnings and AFDC reduction, is described as inconsistent in two ways:**

  1) In some programs that increase employment and earnings for people who receive adult education, the role of education in producing these is unclear (as in the case of the Baltimore program above).
  2) Programs that produce impacts in educational attainment and achievement do not necessarily show economic impacts as well. There is, however, some evidence linking participation in adult education programs with economic outcomes. For example, the employment impacts of GAIN were almost entirely experienced by those who achieved a GED through the program. However, many others who attained this credential did not become employed.

Like the authors of previous studies, Pauly and DiMeo conclude that longer follow up studies and more finely tuned analyses are needed to determine whether and how adult education affects employment and reduced AFDC receipt (ES-4).

We long to hear instead that most, or some, individuals who participated in such programs got jobs. We'd like to know that these jobs were permanent or lasted a certain number of months, that they paid a certain amount weekly, and that this resulted from some known combination of services interacting with some known external factors. Instead, we know that large numbers of AFDC recipients need adult education services and are more likely to use them when such services are part of a mandatory or voluntary effort to link that education to work. Adult education programs can generate improvements in educational credentials or test scores, but not for those at lower literacy levels. Programs that include education as part of their services can have significant short term impacts on employment, earnings and AFDC reductions, but like those that include only job search, not necessarily on the income, job stability and AFDC recidivism of participants. An exception to the latter occurs when a greater investment in resources is made, but there appears to be a trade off between the ability to make a difference in an individual's ability to find and keep work that pays a living wage and short term government savings. The greatest impact over the long term would result from affecting the minority of recipients who are likely to be long term recipients, but this may require substantial investment. Data on GED attainment, for example, suggest that 2-4 years may not be enough time for large numbers of participants to acquire this credential. Clearly, there are no simple answers, and the backdrop of these studies involving many thousands of individuals may help us to understand these factors better as we look at the smaller studies that follow.

Small Scale Studies and Participant Experiences

If policymakers face trade offs between the kinds of impacts they can expect from the programs they approve, on the one hand, and the costs of such programs, on the other, so single mothers have faced trade offs between welfare and work. The element of choice for them, however, is soon to be removed. Nonetheless, it is instructive to look at their perceptions as they move from welfare to work. These women's opinions about their participation in education and training, work and AFDC were explored in a qualitative study of single mothers in the Boston area by MDRC (Pavetti, 1993). One participant echoed others, who believed that such activities will help them qualify for jobs that pay enough to make it feasible for them to leave welfare:

> "I could get a job now I guess, but why work? I wouldn't get any more than I do now. If I got a job, I'd have to pay for all of my bills; they would take away my food stamps. And I would have to spend more time away from my kids. I'm hoping that when I finish this program, the pay will be enough so that I can get off welfare (quoted in Pavettit, 1993: 10)."

- **Participants in education programs believed that such activities would help them qualify for jobs that pay enough to leave welfare. Such women speak from**

experience; many women enroll in education and training only after working in jobs that led nowhere, or finding out that they did not have the skills to land a job.

- **Those not involved in education and training cited child care and health problems as the two main reasons for not participating.** Child care is a barrier for many reasons, including cost and quality of care. This was particularly true for women with sick or handicapped children. While some women felt their child care problems would be manageable if they worked part time, this would not provide enough income to offset the loss of public assistance, Medicaid and food stamps.

- **Many of the women moved back and forth between welfare and low paying jobs, and seek education and training to break the cycle.**

> "Shortly after I was on AFDC, they offered me a training program. They put me through a graphics arts program. I had taken some courses in high school. When I was done with the program, I lucked into a secure job that paid me $8 an hour. Then I moved to another company and negotiated $11.50 an hour. Now I make $14 an hour (quoted in Pavetti: 16)."

> "Speaking for myself, I'm trying to get ahead of the game. I got involved in the community meetings, boards. I was a representative for my development. I was on top of things with school. I help with community food hand-outs. My break was with Head Start. That was my step up. They sent me to school. I got my child care certificate and then I got my Associates (17)."

- **Some women who had become employed felt they were not any better off financially now that they were working.**

> "Before I worked I was on AFDC. They push you to get a job and then they take everything away. I was on AFDC for four years and I got Medicaid and food stamps. I was definitely better off on AFDC (17)."

This sentiment was also expressed by a woman working three part-time jobs to support herself and her foaur children, as well as by a woman in a stable job earning $25,000 a year. However, some women do feel better off:

> "And with working, you get a raise maybe once a year or once every three months. The benefits are about the same. And when I worked and paid taxes at the end of the year and claimed dependents and stuff, I used to get a lot of money back (7)."

- **Once employed, the struggle to stay employed centers around finding reliable, affordable and quality child care.**

> "For the first year I had a voucher . . .I put myself on lots of lists . . . .I took a week off work and went out and talked to everyone. I called everyone I could and told them if I didn't get a spot I will have to go on welfare and that would cost them more and that here I was, I wanted to work . . .I showed people letters from my boss. . . .I was robbed while fighting for day care. The funny thing is the next day I got three calls from different day cares. I was a nervous wreck before that though - my hair started to fall out (19)."

Another woman recounted similar experiences:

> "One of the big problems was I had no reliable day care. I did everything. I even ran an ad in the paper for babysitting for my kids. I got a babysitter who worked out but she decided she wanted to go to work. Then I got my daughter into school but I needed someone to take care of my son. I got this other woman but she wasn't reliable. Some days she would come and other days she wouldn't. I even asked their father to watch the kids, but he said he wouldn't (20)."

The report concludes that the transition from welfare to work is a difficult ongoing process, one that involves a series of choices with extremely complex consequences. Looking at the transition in this way helps us understand why there is no simple, clear cut route to work, such as attaining a GED. It also forces us to realize the centrality of day care to decisions about both work and education. There is already evidence that the implementation of welfare reform strains the already oversubscribed public day care centers available to those on welfare, and forces competition with the working poor for existing spaces (Preston, 1996: B1). The worry and fear over their children's well being is caused by the lack of affordable child care in the United States in general, the result of a deliberate policy decision that child care is a responsibility of individuals and families. This makes the U.S. almost unique among industrialized countries, and is an area of policy that might impact the welfare to work transition as much or more than any other. A similar statement could be made about universal health care. ***The lack of such policies, however, considerably ups the education ante for women on AFDC; if they are to earn enough to afford child care and health insurance, they are likely to need more education.***

- **The perspective of single mothers complicates the picture of the welfare to work transition not only by adding the barriers of child and health care, but also by offering evidence of the complicated trajectory experienced by women attempting to leave welfare for work. Individuals must make decisions based on support available, barriers faced, past experience and present opportunities. Such data make it clear that mandating fixed sequences of activities and time lines will not necessarily accomplish the goals of either government or individuals.**

An ethnographic study of former welfare recipients who obtained employment as a result of participation in a publicly funded employment training program furthers our understanding of the complexity of welfare to work programs and their outcomes. While such individuals would be counted among the successes in the large studies above, the author presents a more nuanced picture, indicated by her title "From Welfare to Working Poor." She bases her conclusions on the experiences of individuals in an urban setting with a large minority population. Outcomes and variables affecting these will differ in rural or more homogenous settings.

- **Welfare to work initiatives see their goal as helping an individual get their foot in the door, and assume that internal or external career ladders are available to them once working, however, without an additional educational investment, most doors or next steps on career ladders are effectively ruled out for participants, particularly participants of color. The door, ironically, is a revolving one. Post-welfare, all 23 individuals followed in the study were still poor and marginalized. They were overlooked by a system that supported their transition to work but offered no training or educational assistance once they were working.(Riemer, 1997: 106)**

Participants in this study are the faces and voices behind the troubling finding that although welfare to work programs produce employment, they don't change lives. Moreover, racist assumptions about the lack of work experience and work readiness of the participants led to an emphasis on world of work teaching of middle class behavioral norms, rather than on technical or academic skills.

While many participants entered both training and employment with high hopes, this was followed by a 'cooling off" period when individuals shifted from "initial excitement about new opportunities to ensuing disappointment and resignation" (97). This occurred as they found themselves stuck in dead end jobs without benefits or chance for advancement, and were still perceived by others as having all of the negative traits associated with people who receive public assistance.

Such perceptions had real consequences in their workplaces; for example, unpaid sick time was described as "an hourly policy designed to encourage attendance and participation (93)." As a result, individuals hired from the welfare rolls, as well as almost all the other poor African Americans and Latinos on the staff of the workplace studied, were subject to a completely different set of personnel policies than were other workers. They also received lower hourly wages, no paid sick leave or vacation, and no tuition reimbursement.

The experience of these participants is not unique. In a 1989 study of the efficacy of JTPA Title II programs in New York City, Lafer documented not only the lack of available jobs but the racial and gender segmentation of the labor market, a reality also recognized by the New York City Workforce Development Commission (1993) and others (Von Wagner and Syman, 1994). Jobs and hiring in a number of industries studied by Lafer are described as accommodating increasing numbers of African Americans and Latinos in the work force by expanding the secondary labor market characterized by low wages and few opportunities for expansion:

> The clearest example of this may be the case of bank tellers. These positions were largely reserved for whites 20 years ago, and they were also positions that afforded a measure of contact with other bank employees and some opportunity for upward mobility. In the reconstructed occupations of the late 1980s, teller positions in New York banks became largely filled with minorities, but these positions were completely cut off from any possibility for upward mobility within the bank's occupational structure. . . .The organization of business services and data processing have been carried out along similar lines (Lafer, 1992: 224)

Interestingly, the racial and gender hierarchy of bank jobs is also implicated in the shortcomings of a vocational training program studied by Hull (1991). Because labor market segmentation functions to assign people of color to low level jobs despite education and training, Lafer concluded his analysis of labor market trends and job training with the assertion that vigorous affirmative action policies may prove more effective than job training as a strategy for eradicating poverty and expanding employment for people of color (1992:229-230).

The evidence in these "bottom up" perspectives emphasizes different definitions of success for the welfare to work transition and correspondingly different pathways to achieving real change in the lives of individuals on welfare who seek education, training and work.

Bos explored the lack of clear evidence for the impact of basic education in statewide JOBS programs in a study of participants in New Chance, a national demonstration project developed by MDRC and implemented in 16 sites around the country (1996). The program combined education, vocational training and college classes with intensive case management, free child care and other support services. The sample for the study consisted of 2079 young women, with 70% reading at or below ninth grade on the TABE (test of adult basic education). The follow up period of the study was 42 months. Bos investigated the impact of educational outcomes over a period of three years among young mothers on welfare who lacked a high school diploma. For such women, basic education and receipt of a GED generated small and even negative earning effects, while receipt of a post-secondary training certificate increased average monthly earnings by $121. ***Bos concludes that substantial earnings effects for single women on public assistance are not felt until a post-secondary level of education is achieved.***

- **Bos found that while remedial basic education and GED preparation are necessary as prerequisites for certificate training programs and college, participation without completion with an educational credential may actually have a negative effect on earnings, at least in the short run. He cautions: "participants should be made aware that basic education has little value by itself and should be strongly induced to pursue post-GED training and credentials. (16)" He suggests that concurrent**

basic education and GED preparation with training, rather than offering these sequentially, might lead to faster labor market payoffs.

Conclusion

When we evaluate the inconclusive findings of studies of adult basic education in welfare to work programs, we must also compare these to approaches that do not involve adult education. The studies reviewed here show that labor force attachment approaches can move individuals into jobs, but that these jobs do not pay enough or last long enough to support permanent self-sufficiency. Thus far, there is little to no conclusive evidence for workfare as a strategy to move large numbers of people into the paid workforce, let alone into full-time jobs paying above poverty level wages. Like JOBS programs, workfare will reduce AFDC payments and receipt. In addition, it will force people to work for the public assistance they receive. But a study on the impact of workfare on New York State found that it was the least successful strategy for moving individuals into jobs. Compared to job search, job readiness training and on the job training, workfare generated only a 6% placement rate (Leon, 1995:12). A 1996 update concluded that:

> The main impact of workfare has been as a sanctioning tool, terminating or suspending benefits to welfare participants for alleged noncompliance with workfare rules. The sanction rate is almost three times the entry to employment rate for participants in workfare (Hunger Action Network of New York State, 1996:1).

A national study by MDRC also found little evidence that unpaid work experience led to consistent employment, earnings, or reduction in welfare payments or receipt (Brock et. al., 1993:3).

The other major national policy for moving participants to work offers incentives to employers who hire recipients. Even proponents of this approach concede it has been a failure in the past (Offner, 1997: A27). While it is not the purpose of this report to fully evaluate these alternatives, their lack of demonstrated success in achieving job placements puts the achievements of the programs reviewed above in perspective.

- **We need longer term studies of the impact of adult education on welfare to work initiatives, and we need to better understand the complex dynamics of education variables as they intersect with other obstacles to employment. Individuals on public assistance may need more education, or differently structured programs with different curricula, than those tried in the past. Adult education providers and practitioners must better articulate program goals and better demonstrate program outcomes.**

- Despite these shortcomings in our knowledge about and our evidence for the importance of adult education, it remains the welfare to work strategy most clearly linked to long term employment impacts. Moreover, even for individuals who succeed at getting jobs, as in the study cited above, education remains central to the ability to advance on the job and to lift oneself above the ranks of the working poor.

III. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS AND THE CURRENT LABOR MARKET

- **Most public assistance recipients entering the labor force will be competing for the very small fraction of available jobs in central cities that have few serious requirements in terms of skills and credentials, and where there is currently no evidence of any shortage of workers (Holzer, 1996: 67-8).**

A recent study conducted by researchers from the Center for Urban Economic Development and the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Chicago Urban League echoes these conclusions. They found that while overall unemployment rates in Illinois are at their lowest levels in more than 20 years, the jobless rate for those needing entry level jobs is nearly twice that of other workers. In fact, there are four workers in search of entry-level jobs for every entry-level job opening in Illinois.

- **In the urban centers of Chicago and East St. Louis, the gap is worse: six workers for every entry level job opening in Chicago and nine for every opening in St. Louis. Moreover, the study estimates that entry level jobs that pay a living wage have between 33 and 222 job seekers for every opening, depending on how the minimally adequate wage level is calculated (Herbert, 1997).**

The transformation of the U.S. economy over the past ten years that has resulted in this situation is well documented. Few would argue that good jobs for those with few skills and little education exist anymore. The total number of jobs has been reduced and the remainder present few opportunities for those with little formal education. Moreover, inflation adjusted pay is often considerably lower than wages for comparable jobs in the past (Wegmann 1989). Studies of dislocated workers consistently show that earnings on new jobs are lower than on previous ones, and that workers often lose the benefits they previously enjoyed (38; Koppel and Hoffman 1996, Menzi and Huang 1993) Moreover, jobs increasingly demand higher education (44). In an exhaustive view of work in the current economy, Wegmann et. al. conclude that there is no large pool of jobs that go unfilled because there are not enough skilled people to fill them, and that therefore, retraining is not a solution for large numbers of displaced workers (1989: 79).

What do these trends mean for public assistance recipients and adult educators, for policymakers concerned with moving people from welfare to work? In an attempt to answer this question, Holzer explored job prospects for less-educated workers in research among employers who actually hire such workers. Rather than relying on aggregate labor market statistics, Holzer surveyed more than 3000 employers of low skilled workers in four cities (Atlanta, Boston, Detroit and Los Angeles). His goal was to present a "demand side" picture of the labor market welfare reform programs hope to supply.

Holzer found a general deterioration on the return for high school diplomas in the labor market. Young male high school graduates of all races earn 20-30% less than such workers did in the early 1970s, and they work less frequently (2). Moreover, even in jobs requiring less education, employers currently seek a higher level of cognitive skills, such as reading, writing and computer literacy, as well as social skills required for customer service. A survey of employers indicated that even among those who hire less educated and unskilled inner city workers, three quarters of available jobs require high school diplomas, 70% require general work experience and 73% require references. Paper and pencil tests are used in roughly half of hiring, and 30-40% of jobs check on both education and prior criminal records (54-55). Moreover, none of the job opportunities for the less qualified offer promising prospects for good income or long term advancement (60).

- **Posing the often ignored demand side of the question about job availability for the low skilled, Holzer concludes that only 5-10% of jobs do not require cognitive task skills and only 4-6% require no credentials (63). In exploring who actually gets hired for existing jobs, Holzer finds that problems of geography and transportation as well as discrimination by race impede the employment prospects of blacks (104).**

Workers who are particularly lacking in labor market skills and credentials, especially black workers and those whose access to suburban labor markets is most limited, are the most likely to have difficulties gaining employment in the short term. This is likely to be true for both males and females who have poor skills and credentials, such as long-term AFDC recipients. Even if members of these groups are able to find employment, their earnings are likely to be particularly limited. (105)

Wilson also found discrimination against hiring inner city black workers, based on interviews with more than 200 employers. Employers frequently cited poor verbal and math skills and lack of standard English usage as reasons for not hiring such workers for jobs requiring communication with the public (1996:4).

Katherine Newman conducted research into entry level jobs in Harlem, and drew similar conclusions. She found that there were 14 applicants for each opening, and that social connections and networking contacts were required even for fast food jobs. Due to credential inflation in this tight labor market, those with high school diplomas are now hired for jobs that previously were reserved for the uneducated (1995A:3). Like Holzer, she found that the profile of those actually hired diverged from that of the average AFDC recipient:

- **Employers were more likely to hire men, from outside of the neighborhood, who were not on public assistance and did not have children; single mothers represented less than 10% of workers in the fast food business (3). After looking for a full year, 73% of applicants for entry level jobs are still unemployed; in short, the market is already glutted with people who are better qualified than most welfare recipients (1995B: Section 4, page 1)**

- **Holzer echoes the participants quoted above in noting that welfare recipients face four kinds of obstacles to holding and keeping jobs: work-limiting health conditions,**

deficience in education and basic skills, child care responsibilities and transportation. Long term recipients, moreover, are likely to be less educated, have less work experience, have more and younger children, live in poorer neighborhoods and experience more health care problems.

Because of the nature of the low wage job market, individuals without education credentials are likely to experience low wages; according to the Department of Labor, the lowest paid 10% of full time workers earns an average of $225 a week:

> At those wages, people merely shift to the ranks of the working poor-still dependent on public assistance such as food stamps and subsidized housing. And those are the people who get full-time jobs. Most low wage jobs are temporary or part time. About 17% of the labor force works less than 30 hours a week (Kilborn: 1995, section 4, 2).

In Virginia, for example, the average wage for those welfare recipients who have found jobs was below the poverty level of $15,600 for a family of four, and one third of these do not hold these jobs for long. (Hsu, 1997: B1). Again, these are best case scenarios based on the experiences of those who succeed at obtaining jobs.

- **Grubb investigated returns to education and training at the next level, the sub-baccalaureate labor market, or jobs for those with high school diplomas but not college degrees. He concludes that obtaining credentials is the wisest course for most individuals. He finds that certificate training programs and AA degrees, though not in all fields, increase earnings for individuals who receive them by substantial and statistically significant amounts.**

- **In contrast, he found that the effects of short term job training (the kind usually provided to public assistance recipients) on earnings are zero or even negative, except if provided through on the job employers: The many forms of short term job training which have proliferated over the past 30 years and which continue to be proposed as solutions to problems ranging from dislocated workers to welfare mothers, provide no real benefits (46).**

The sub-baccalaureate labor market is significant because it constitutes about three fifths of existing employment and has been growing steadily. Grubb, like Holzer, set out to investigate the demand side of this labor market, or more accurately, how workers in this segment find jobs, or how their education translates into employment and income. While those with post high school education and training are at some disadvantage relative to those with on the job experience, Grubb found that such credentials were used to secure entry level positions in which individuals gained work experience in their field, and that they then moved up in either the same firm or went to work in a firm further up in the hierarchy characteristic of this job market. Thus, these workers used their credentials to get into a field and then acquired experience to move up.

This is the scenario posed for those on public assistance, but it happens at a higher skill and credential level (32ff).

While the general contraction in the labor market for unskilled workers is widely acknowledged, studies such as these that actually investigate who gets hired and how provide the conceptual missing links between the provision of basic education and training on the one hand, and the disappointing impact on employment and income, on the other. Credential inflation, demand for work experience, and discrimination by race and against public assistance recipients in particular are factors, as are transportation and child care issues. In short, those without basic skills who will be required to work face a tight job market in which they are the least likely to find and keep jobs. Nor will those who succeed lift themselves out of poverty; rather, considerably more education is needed to accomplish this, as well as solutions for the formidable other barriers that recipients face.

This bleak picture of the employment prospects for welfare recipients without high school diplomas will worsen as a result of the emphasis on immediate labor force attachment in the Personal Responsibility Act:

- **As large numbers of public assistance recipients are forced into the labor market, the impact on workers in general and the working poor in particular will result in even lower wages and more restricted access to public day care facilities essential to the employment of mothers (Preston, 1996: B1; Hampson, 1997: A-14). These trends, in turn, will worsen poverty and cause increased cycling between the status of public assistance recipient and working poor. The working poor are already suffering; in 1994 workers with less than a high school education had an unemployment rate of 12.4% (or 21.3% for women), while the national rate was 5.8%, and the wages of low wage workers have fallen by 11.7% since 1979. Researchers predict widespread unemployment and displacement among the working poor as a result of welfare reform, in addition to the depression of wages.**

- **Nationally, the wages of low-wage workers (defined as the bottom 30% of workers--about 31 million men and women who earn less than $7.19 per hour) will have to fall by 11.9%. Wages for low wage workers in states with relatively large welfare populations will have to fall by even more: in California by 17.8% and in New York by 17.1% (Mishel and Schmitt 1996:42).**

Lost income to the working poor is estimated at $36 billion a year, which amounts to 8.5 billion more than the entire national expenditure on AFDC in 1994. Mishel and Schmitt conclude:

> ***Genuine welfare reform must view the nation's safety net in relation to broader economic conditions, particularly those affecting low wage workers who disproportionately rely on welfare and related programs. The barriers that stand between recipients and jobs suggest the need for policies that address***

> ***child care, health care, education and training and job creation in inner city and rural areas. Likewise, the enormous downward pressure on wages implicit in current welfare reform schemes suggests the need for alternative reform measures coupled with policies to enhance productivity and build higher wages for current low wage workers. (43)***

In line with these recommendations, Grubb asks "what responsibilities should employers bear in reconstructing the relation between education and employment? If educators at all levels are increasingly asking for employer input regarding the critical skills needed for the workplace and the kinds of technical knowledge required for jobs in specific fields, what can employers offer to schools and education programs and their participants? Grubb recommends the following:

- **Hiring decisions and wage structures that are more responsive to educational accomplishments and skill differentials in order to provide greater incentives for prospective employees to learn those capacities which employers say are in short supply.**

- **Employers should preserve and enhance career ladders and reduce the cyclical variation in employment in order to provide additional incentives for the accumulation of skills and knowledge (1992: ix).**

Grubb acknowledges that the prevalence of a market driven approach has resulted in a lack of attention to the question of employer responsibilities, and that improving the sub-baccalaureate labor market will require employment policies as well as educational ones.

While many U.S. policymakers consider the market to be either the best or the only wage setting mechanism appropriate for the economy, a study of how other advanced industrialized countries have responded to the global conditions that have resulted in greater wage inequality in the United States suggests alternatives.

- **Differences in wage setting institutions and in training and education systems are critical features of economies that have not experienced the trends for low wage workers discussed above.**

In his summary of findings across advanced industrialized countries, Freeman describes the differences between the United States and such countries (1994). He finds that the latter place more emphasis on wage setting institutions in determining pay and less on pure market forces than the United States. The particular institutions that influenced wages in these countries-centralized collective bargaining of widely differing forms, as in Sweden or Italy; national minimum wages, as in France; the extension of collective bargaining, as in Germany-seem less important than the fact that there were institutions empowered to intervene in favor of low-paid workers. Second, these countries maintained the strength of unions or had smaller declines in unionization that the United States. Third, those countries with more extensive training systems than the United States, notably Japan and Germany, had smaller increases in inequality of earnings than the United States and also did reasonably well in employment growth.

- **When less educated workers are better trained, they are more competitive with highly educated workers and are thus better able to adjust to shifts in labor demand that favor more skilled workers (228). A review of training and education strategies in other advanced industrialized countries concludes that increasing wage inequality is prevented by a range of institutions that support diverse training systems in which the extent of workplace training is intertwined with the pattern of wages and the official certification of skills.**

In Japan and Germany, for example, incentives for youth who do not go on to university to perform well in high school link their progress in the job market to their school or apprenticeship record (81). While the higher earnings of low wage workers in Europe resulted in lower poverty rates than in the United States, the lower level of the American social safety net was also a factor in the higher levels of poverty and inequality in the U.S. (229).

- **Policies to increase the supply of educated workers, by ensuring a labor market return for investment in higher skills and knowledge, effectively decrease inequality. Individuals who respond to such policies by seeking education both raise their own incomes and constitute a " a powerful force in reducing inequality (232)."**

IV. LITERACY AT WORK

- **While it is clear that credentials necessary for employment have risen and that the value of a high school diploma in the labor market has declined, this does not necessarily reflect the demands of jobs themselves.**

Discussions of skills necessary for work are often based on assumptions that anthropological research in workplaces calls into question. In Holzer's work above, for example, when employers state that they need cognitive, social, literacy or numeracy skills, the employer's perception is accepted at face value. The requirement of a high school diploma presumes a certain degree of literacy, and assumes such literacy is necessary for particular jobs. While this operates to justify credential inflation, it also works to bolster the illusion of a neat fit between jobs and skills. If we are concerned about the inability of welfare recipients to find and keep jobs, and we are told this is partly because they lack certain skills, it is important to look more critically at the assumed relationships among work, employment and skills. In fine grained studies of the workplace, ethnographers spend a year or more participating in and observing workplace routines and tasks, the social context in which work is performed, and workplace training and education programs. Their data on how workers actually perform on the job complicates our understanding of the education necessary for work.

In her introduction to an edited volume of articles based on such studies, Hull questions the consensus among employers, government officials and literacy providers that American workers lack critical literacy skills necessary for work, and that such skills are increasingly needed as jobs become more complex. Hull argues that:

- **"The popular discourse of workplace literacy tends to underestimate and devalue human potential and to mis-characterize literacy as a curative for problems that literacy alone cannot solve (1997: 11)".**

- **Moreover, this discourse on work and skills exacerbates the we/they dichotomy that plagues discussions of welfare reform; it stresses the apparent failure of large numbers of people, disproportionately the poor and people of color, to demonstrate competence appropriate to entry level jobs. Shifts in workforce demographics, as women, minorities and immigrants become more prevalent, and as welfare reform takes effect, are likely to aggravate this tendency to view low level workers as deficient, different and separate.**

- **This trend, however, is ably challenged by a growing body of research that documents the variety of literacies people employ in different settings and the ability of individuals to acquire the literacies they need. In the words of Shirley Brice Health, who has studied literacy in a variety of contexts and communities, including**

the literacy required by public assistance recipients who must negotiate a sea of documents and forms to receive welfare:

> **. . .all normal individuals can learn to read and write, provided they have a setting or context in which there is a need to be literate, they are exposed to literacy, and they get some help from those who are already literate (1986:23).**

Specifically with regard to work preparation, or the relationship between literacy as measured by conventional tests and indicators and the ability to perform particular jobs, studies of military recruits with low test scores show that they performed as well as those with average scores once in the services (15). In an instructional program designed to help New York City workers pass a licensing exam that had long thwarted their opportunities at work, McDermott began with the belief that the workers "only had to tame their knowledge into a form that would enable them to take and pass the test" (1987:6). Using a peer teaching system that paired men who had passed the test with each group of ten students, the program achieved success when most men passed the test on the first try and all passed by the second. In a combined education and training program designed by 1199, the Health and Hospital Workers Union, workers who scored as low as a 2.7 on the Test of Adult Basic Education achieved scores in the 80s and 90s on national registration exams taken as part of the process of becoming internationally recognized as registered central supply technicians (D'Amico, 1997).

- **These examples show that a paper and pencil test, aptitude test, IQ test or school performance data do not necessarily predict job-related abilities and performance. They tell us that if we choose to use them as such, we are screening out capable workers and erecting additional barriers to employment.**

What workplace and training ethnographies provide is evidence of a different, more complicated picture of literacy, one that more accurately reflects how literacy is used at work. By showing the writing, reading, talking and thinking characteristics of particular job and job training settings, the expertise of ordinary workers is revealed. This expertise, and the literacies that support it, in turn generates a rethinking of the concept of literacy, and results in a very different understanding of literacy than that which informs policy. As Hull points out, literacy is popularly identified with sets of discrete skills, reading and writing abilities that do not vary from situation to situation, but are rather like attributes a person takes from one setting to another. As such, they are abstract competencies that are context free. Current research, however, questions this view with findings that literacy varies across contexts. A common sense way to understand this is to recognize that even if one is a highly competent reader, a text from an unfamiliar field may render one situationally illiterate.

A conception of literacy as varying with context, with the purpose for which literacy is invoked, and with the consequences of literacy performances is not only a technical or academic issue. It is also a question of power; if welfare recipients have learned the literacy of mastering public assistance documents, but not the literacy of gatekeeping tests for employment, their literacy is not only different, but labeled insufficient for employment by those with the power to do so. Similarly, the close connection between literacy and the cultural traditions of poor communities means that their literacies are both invisible and undervalued in most employment situations.

Once we define literacy as literacies: socially constructed practices based in cultural symbol systems and organized around beliefs about how reading and writing should be used to serve particular social and personal purposes and ends, what we need to know to understand, develop and improve literacy for individuals is enlarged.

- **Because the "rhetoric of skills" that informs policy is not based on empirical evidence about work and how it is actually done, we profoundly simplify our understanding of work, and thus we limit our ability to design programs that result in more qualified workers or improved workplaces (Darrah, 1996). For example, a better understanding of how learning evolves on the job, and of how literacy practices are distributed and shared in "communities of practice" that develop among workers, may help us design apprentice or on the job learning strategies that succeed better than the school based methods used in a classroom (Hull, 1997: 22).**

Hull's book includes articles that demonstrate the poverty of the notion of skills with regard to effective design of workplace literacy or job training programs. A critical assumption of the public discourse on skills is that it shares with notions of welfare reform a faulty supply side emphasis. As the research on employment and literacy above shows, there is currently a shortage of jobs for those required to work under welfare reform, and this shortage is exacerbated for those without the credentials commonly seen as demonstrating ability to perform a job by employers.

- **The rethinking of literacy by those who have closely studied literacy at work and in workplace education and training programs should encourage us to advocate that measures of literacy as conventionally defined should not by themselves bar capable individuals from work.**

Although it is illegal to require the use of literacy as a screening device unless the literacy skills measured reflect actual job demands, these tests are routinely used to eliminate otherwise qualified job seekers. Studies that document the failure of such tests to predict job performance and their use as obstacles to employment for women and people of color (Castellano, 1997: 192-3) can inform the design of programs that are specifically designed to open doors to employment for people previously excluded from the workplace.

- **Not only do ethnographic studies of literacy and work encourage us to rethink program design, and provide evidence to argue against the use of literacy measured**

by tests to restrict access to employment, they also make clear the inseparability of literacy learning from the contexts of learners lives.

In her description of a workplace literacy program at a Southern University, Gowen depicts the connection between the violence and abuse which poor women without formal education suffer disproportionately and their literacy learning. For such women, words "were perceived as weapons." Words were used to separate and diminish people, not to connect and empower them (Belenkey, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule, quoted in Gilligan, 1986: 151). A student in the class described by Gowen said about her former silence regarding her abuse: "Before I didn't have any goals. The secret took up all my space for goals. Now I don't have a secret and I have goals."(147). In the same way that the child care and health care needs of the women studied by Pavetti situate their welfare to work behavior and decisions in a context that reflects their reality, so Gowen's discussion of the implications of domestic violence for pedagogy in literacy classes demonstrates the importance of these considerations for educators, program planners and policymakers. Domestic violence has reportedly also interfered with efforts of women on welfare to maintain employment (DeParle, 1994: A1).

- **The most significant contribution made by ethnographies focused on work, education and training is a shift in perspective to that of the worker or learner.**

As Churchill demonstrated in her study of women in a welfare to work program, the "we" in welfare reform as we know it does not include the voices of those central to its implementation, resulting in flawed understanding of the reasons why such women receive public assistance and what it would take to change their lives (1995). An ethnographic study that followed up a group of women garment workers for two years after their factory closed, asked what difference the job training they received had made to their reemployment. The study compared employment experiences of women who had taken part in a training program or GED class with those who had not participated in such instruction and found no significant difference in employment status between the two groups. (Merrifield, 1997:281). However, the longer the program in which women enrolled, the more likely they were to have a job. Eighty six percent of those who attended a 12 month long program were likely to be employed; the remainder were still in school. While the women who participated in training succeeded in moving from manufacturing to other kinds of jobs, there was not a close correlation between the jobs they trained for and the jobs they got, and like other displaced workers who have participated in training programs, they lost wages. Average wages dropped by 24% , from $7.08 per hour to $5.36 per hour. Less than a quarter achieved the same wage or increased it. Also common to displaced workers, these women lost benefits and union membership. Neatly summarizing the significance of ethnographic studies for welfare to work programs, the study concluded:

> ***When women engage in training and end up in production jobs no different than the ones they had before, they and the economy gain little. We have to pay attention both to workers' skills and to job creation. We also have to pay attention to what people want, to opportunities for learning that are not***

> ***restricted to getting a job, to personal growth and literacy that meets people's needs, not just employers' needs. If job training is to be even a part of the answer, if it is to facilitate the kinds of occupational changes that global economic restructuring makes necessary, it must be tailored to the context of particular communities and the needs of individual clients-one size does not fit all. The training program must take into account the particular needs of women-for peer support, for family support, for education about the labor market, and for learning and personal development. Good job training programs should also assume that customers are intelligent people who can be part of planning their own programs. Many of the women we talked to had ideas about how the training program could have been more helpful and more effective, but participants are seldom asked for their opinions by the Congress that designs their programs (291).***

In this study, an advisory group of women from the training programs took an active part in all phases of the research, working closely with the Literacy Studies Staff in designing the study, conducting it, and participating in the final analysis.

Conclusion

- **A more holistic understanding of work, learning, and the lives of welfare recipients demands a holistic response to education and training, one that individuals can take advantage of regardless of their level of literacy or education and whether they are working or not. Like the European and Japanese systems referred to above, this system should have close linkages to labor market needs and to wages paid as a result of increased education and training.**

Grubb suggests such a reform of job training and work related education efforts for adults, along the lines of the School to Work model currently being implemented throughout K-12 systems across the country. Reviewing the results of welfare to work and other training initiatives and finding their impacts either negligible or disappointingly small, Grubb calls for a systemic approach to providing education and training that allows adults to obtain jobs and to continue to advance when employed.

- **Consolidation of education and training programs over time will be away from special purpose job training programs and toward broader education ones. The implication is that short term job training and other programs targeted toward the poor will become part of a larger system of training and education opportunities in each state.**

Five elements of the school to Work approach are suggested as crucial to such a system:

1. Academic (including 'remedial") instruction.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2. Vocational skills integrated with academic instruction in a variety of ways.
3. Work-based education coordinated with school based instruction through connecting activities.
4. The connection of every program to the next in a hierarchy of education and training opportunities.
5. Applied teaching methods and team-teaching strategies.

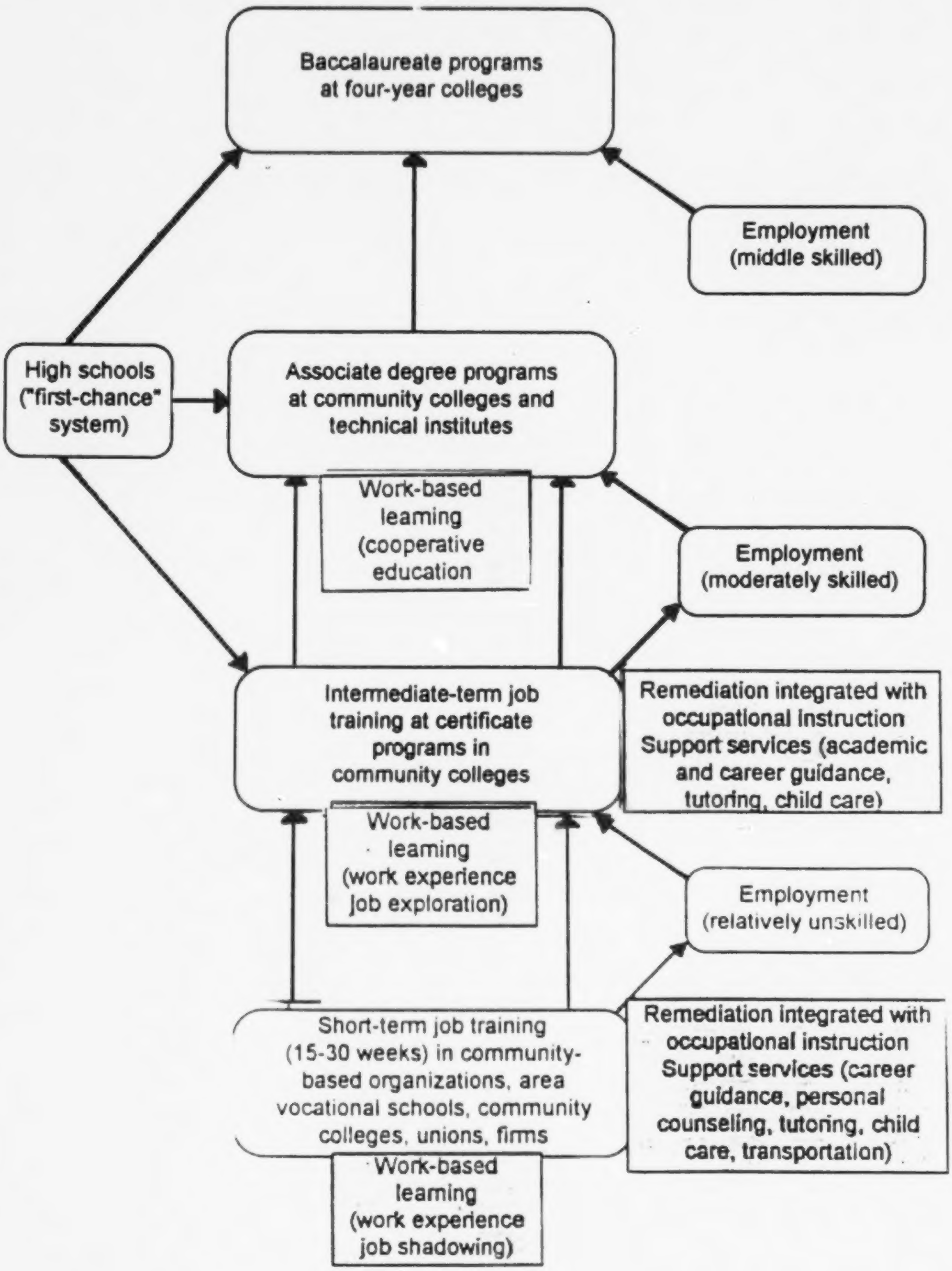
The latter point is particularly interesting in light of the current trend to push education in the job training direction. Grubb implies that, rather:

- **Training should become more like adult education, and develop pedagogies that are contextualized, student centered, active and project or activity based.**

Contextualized programs for many adult educators mean more than including work vocabulary or terms in reading and writing, or narrowly focusing on the documents and forms used in a particular occupation; rather they imply a connection between what is taught and what is meaningful in the lives of learners, not only as workers but in all of their complex adult roles. Grubb advocates that training and education adhere to the standards of good practice developed for adult education (1996:109).

The vertical integration of training and education proposed by Grubb, (see chart) also addresses the issue of advancement raised for those who transition from welfare to working poor. The ladder begins with 15-30 week programs such as those currently provided by JTPA and welfare to work initiatives, after which individuals can leave to seek employment or enter subsequent programs leading to higher level skills and education. Alternatively, individuals who enter employment could re-enter the ladder at a later time. Two year colleges become the connection between what is now experienced as job training and the education system at both the higher and lower levels. Institutions outside of education, such as CBOs, unions and businesses, would provide some of the lower level training. Such a system would build on the variety of programmatic approaches adult educators and service providers have devised in response to welfare reform, and on some of the linkages developed under the JOBS initiative.

Figure 7.1 **A Unified Education and Training System**


Baccalaureate programs at four-year colleges
Employment (middle skilled)
High schools ("first-chance" system)
Associate degree programs at community colleges and technical institutes
Work-based learning (cooperative education
Employment (moderately skilled)
Intermediate-term job training at certificate programs in community colleges
Remediation integrated with occupational instruction Support services (academic and career guidance, tutoring, child care)
Work-based learning (work experience job exploration)
Employment (relatively unskilled)
Short-term job training (15-30 weeks) in community-based organizations, area vocational schools, community colleges, unions, firms
Remediation integrated with occupational instruction Support services (career guidance, personal counseling, tutoring, child care, transportation)
Work-based learning (work experience job shadowing)

W. Norton Grubb, Learning to Work: The Case for Reintegrating Job Training and Education.
© 1996 Russell Sage Foundation, New York, New York.

References Cited

Barton, Paul E. and Lynn Jenkins
1995 Literacy and Dependency: the Literacy Skills of Welfare Recipients in the United States. Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service.

Belenky, M.F., B. Clinchy, N. Goldberger and J. Tarule
1986 Women's Ways of Knowing. New York: Basic Books.

Bos, Johannes M.
1996 Effects of Education and Educational Credentials on the Earnings of Economically Disadvantaged Young Mothers. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation Working Paper.

Brock, Thomas, David Butler, and David Long
1993 Unpaid Work Experience for Welfare Recipients: Findings and Lessons from MDRC Research. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

Castellano, Marisa
1997 "It's Not Your Skills, It's the Test": Gatekeepers for Women in the Skilled Trades. IN Changing work, Changing Workers, Glynda Hull, ed. N.Y.: SUNY Press, pp. 189-213.

Churchill, Nancy
1995 Ending Welfare as we Know it: A Case Study in Urban Anthropology and Public Policy. Urban Anthropology 24, 2: 5-35.

Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce
1990 America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages! Rochester, N.Y.: National Center on Education and the Economy.

D'Amico, Deborah
1997 Intensive Short-Term Training for At-Risk Workers with Low Literacy. Unpublished final report of study for Local 1199, Health and Hospital Workers Union.

Darrah, Charles
1996 Learning and Work: An Exploration in Industrial Ethnography. Studies in Education and Culture, Volume 8. Garland Reference Library of Social Science 1069. New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc.

DeParle, Jason
1994 Welfare Mothers Find Jobs are Easier to Get than Hold. New York Times 10/24/94: A1.

Dionne, E.J.
1996 Muddying the Water with Facts. Washington Post, 5/28/97: A11.

Freedman, Stephen and Daniel Friedlander
1995 The JOBS Evaluation: Early Findings on Program Impacts in Three Sites. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Freeman, Richard B.
1994 Working Under Different Rules. New York: Russell Sage.

Freidlander, Daniel and Barry Burtless
1995 Five Years After: The Long Term Effects of Welfare to Work Programs. New York: Russell Sage.

Gowen, Sheryl Greenwood and Carol Bartlett
1997 "Friends in the Kitchen": Lessons from Survivors. IN Changing Work, Changing Workers, Glynda Hull, ed. N.Y.: SUNY Press, 141-158.

Grubb, Norton W.
1996 Learning to Work. New York: Russell Sage, N.Y.
1995 The Returns to Education and Training in the Sub-Baccalaureate Labor Market: Evidence from the Survey of Income and Program Participation 1984-1990. Berkeley, Ca.: National Center for Research on Vocational Education, University of California at Berkeley..
---------------------Torry Dickinson, Lorraine Giordano and Gail Kaplan
1992 Betwixt and Between: Education, Skills, and Employment in the Sub-Baccalaureate Labor Markets. Berkeley, Ca.: National Center for Research on Vocational Education, University of California at Berkeley.

Gueron, Judith M. and Edward Pauly
1991 From Welfare to Work. N.Y.: Russell Sage.

HANAC BEGIN Students: Christine Calabrese, Debora Ferguson, Jennie Gonzalez, Carol A. Hazel, Sylvia Jackson, Cynthia Johnson, Ruth Mateo, Marva Mitchell, Leslie Newland, Darlene Richardson, Lenora Woodroffe
1995 A Student Perspective on Welfare Reform. Literacy Harvest 4,1: 9-10.

Hampson, Rick
1997 Workfare's Tough Love: Finding Child Care a Struggle for Moms Put on a Payroll. Bergen Record, 2/17/97: A-14.

Heath, Shirley Brice
1986 The Functions and Uses of Literacy. IN Literacy, Society and Schooling: A Reader, S. De Castell, A. Luke and K. Egan, eds. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, pp. 15-26.

Herbert, Bob
1997 The Artful Dodger. New York Times Op-Ed Page 3/10/97.

Holzer, Harry J
1996 What Employers Want: Job Prospects for Less-Educated Workers. New York: Russell Sage.

Hull, Glynda
1997 Introduction. **IN** Changing Work, Changing Workers: Critical Perspectives on Language, Literacy and Skills, Glynda Hull, ed.. SUNY Series: Literacy, Culture and Earning: Theory and Practice. State University of New York Press, pp. 3-39.
1991 Examining the Relations of Literacy to Vocational Education and Work: An Ethnography of a Vocational Program in Banking and Finance. Technical Report. Berkeley, Ca.: National Center for Research on Vocational Education, University of California at Berkeley.

Hsu, Spencer S.
1997 Va. Welfare Recipients Feel the Pressure: Some Facing Cutoff Have Trouble Getting- and Keeping-Jobs that Pay a Living Wage. Washington Post, 2/3/97: B1.

Hunger Action Network of New York State
1996 Does Workfare Work? Albany, N.Y.: Hunger Action Network of New York State.

Kane, Thomas J., and Cecilia Elena Rouse
1993 Labor Market Returns to Two- and Four- Year College: Is a Credit a Credit and Do Degrees Matter? Faculty Research Working Paper Series. John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Kilborn, Peter T.
1995 Take This Job: Up From Welfare: It's Harder and Harder. New York Times, 4/16/95: Section 4, p. 1.

Koppel, Ross and Alice Hoffman
1996 Dislocation Policies in the USA: What Should We Be doing? Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences 544: 111-126.

Lafer, Gordon
1992 Minority Unemployment, Labor Market Segmentation, and the Failure of Job Training Policy in New York city. Urban Affairs Quarterly 28, 2: 206-235.

Leon, Rachel
1995 Workfare in NYS: Does it Work? A Study on the Impact of New Workfare Regulations and the Correlation between Emphasis on Workfare and Job Entry. Albany, N.Y.: Hunger Action Network of New York State.

Martinson, Karin and Daniel Friedlander
1994 GAIN: Basic Education in a Welfare to Work Program. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

McDermott, R. And S. Goldman
1987 Exterminating Illiteracy. Information Update 4, 1: 5-6. New York: Literacy Assistance Center.

Menzi, Donald Wilder and Qi Huang
1993 Dislocated Workers in New York City: Analysis of Data from the January 1992 Current Population Survey. City University of New York: Workforce Development Center.

Merrifield, Juliet
1997 If Job Training is the Answer, What is the Question? Research with Displaced Women Textile Workers. IN Changing Work, Changing Workers, Glynda Hull, ed. N.Y.: SUNY Press.

Mishel, Lawrence and John Schmitt
1995 Cutting Wages by Cutting Welfare: the Impact of Reform on the Low-Wage Labor Market. Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute Briefing Paper.

Newman, Katherine S.
1995 What Inner-City Jobs for Welfare Moms? New York Times 5/20/95: 23.
---------------------------and Chauncy Lennon
1995 Finding Work in the Inner City: How Hard it is Now? How Hard will it be for AFDC Recipients? New York: Russell Sage Working Paper.

New York City Workforce Development Commission
1993 The New Workforce: Investing in New York City's Competitiveness. Report of the Commission to Mayor Dinkins.

Offner, Paul
1997 Jobfare, Familiar and Failed. New York Times 9/27/97: A27.

Pauly, Edward, David Long and Karin Martinson
1992 Linking Welfare and Education: a Study of New Programs in Five States. New York: Manpower Development Research Corporation.

Pavetti, LaDonna
1993 Learning from the Voices of Mothers: Single Mothers' Perceptions of the Trade-Offs Between Welfare and Work. New York: Manpower Development Research Corporation.

Preston, Jennifer
1996 Welfare Rules Intensify Need for Day Care: Aid Recipients Compete with the Working Poor. New York Times 11/11/96: B1.

Rabinovitz, Jonathan
1995 Faster Exit off Welfare? New York Times 5/19/95: B1, B5.

Riemer, Frances Julia
1997 From Welfare to Working Poor: Prioritizing Practice in Research on Employment Training Programs for the Poor. Anthropology and Education Quarterly 28, 1: 85-110.

Stein, Sondra Gayle
1997 Equipped for the Future: A Reform Agenda for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning. Washington, D.C.: National Institute for Literacy.

Von Wagner, Marcia J. And Stefanie Syman
1994 A Profile of the New York City Labor Force. New York City Economic Policy and Marketing Group. Office of the Deputy Mayor for Finance and Economic Development.

Wegmann, Robert, Robert Chapman and Miriam Johnson
1989 Work in the New Economy: Careers and Job Seeking into the 21st Century. Alexandria, Va.: American Association for Counseling and Development.

Wilson, William Julius
1996 Joblessness, the Urban Underclass and Welfare Reform: A Discussion with William Julius Wilson. Washington D.C.:National Health Policy Forum Issue Brief #691.

PART TWO: ADULT EDUCATION AND WELFARE TO WORK INITIATIVES: WHAT WE DO

- **Shared attributes of successful programs include "a clear concept of the educational and other needs of welfare recipients, support to teachers' ongoing efforts to innovate and experiment in the classroom and adequate funding to put innovative ideas into practice (Quint, Forthcoming, viii)."**

- **Promising practices shared by selected program sites include:**
  1. ***A well-defined mission.***
  2. ***Separate classes specifically for JOBS students.***
  3. ***Skilled, experienced teachers.***
  4. ***An emphasis on staff development.***
  5. ***Varied instructional approaches that involve active learning.***
  6. ***Frequent communication about students' progress between educators and JOBS program staff.***
  7. ***A stress on regular attendance, with aggressive follow-up for absences.***
  8. ***Relatively intensive class schedules.***
  9. ***A high degree of teacher-student and student-student interaction.*** (viii-ix)

I. PROGRAM MODELS

In a study conducted for the U.S. Department of Education, Quint identified adult education programs that serve welfare clients in ways that hold promise for the field (Forthcoming). These programs were chosen as examples of how good adult education practices can shape services that meet the requirements of welfare reform. The program descriptions that follow are the result of research conducted prior to the implementation of the Personal Responsiblity Act. Although some descriptions are in the present tense, readers are cautioned not to assume that these descriptions reflect current practice.

1. California GAIN Programs

We already know that GAIN in California achieved some success with its partnership of the California Department of Social Services, local education providers and local Private Industry Councils. Because the funding of this program, particularly its ability to hire and reward good teachers, is considered critical to its success, the contributions of the partners are worth noting. Teacher salaries were paid by ADA funds (federal JOBS monies administered through the State Department of Education and allocated according to reported figures on average daily attendance); the PIC funded hardware, software, equipment, books and supplies, as well as the salaries of teacher aides. Job Training Partnership Act funds were used to pay at least one instructor at two of the learning centers. DSS paid for data collecting and reporting, clerical staff and other costs to schools incurred by providing services to GAIN participants (16-17).

The guiding principles of the program included the realization that school was an unpleasant memory for many participants; therefore, the program took education out of its traditional setting (schools) and moved it into learning centers or labs in accessible neighborhoods. For example, one center is in a continuing education center of a community college, another is in a small shopping center, and a third is in an industrial park. In this way, educators sought to give students the feel of a "fresh start (17)." The decision to serve only GAIN students, rather than to mix them in with the larger adult education population, was based on the desire to create a caring, nurturing environment and to provide resources and attention devoted specifically to them. The learning centers also featured state-of-the-art technology, offering a new way of learning and an introduction to prevalent workplace technology and technology also used by participants' children. In addition, the use of computers facilitated a more individualized pace of instruction, and allowed for simultaneous development of computer literacy with other forms of basic education. The final principle behind GAIN's success was the use of financial incentives to attract experienced teachers.

Attendance in GAIN, because of its mandatory nature as well as its affect on ADA revenues, is closely monitored. State regulations require 25 hours per week. Attendance records are submitted to DSS monthly. Rewards and incentives support regular attendance, such as certificates of perfect attendance or discount coupons from local merchants. A critical feature of GAIN's success is the role of the Education Social Workers assigned to each center. ESWs visit the centers regularly to review attendance data, talk with teachers about student problems and meet with students. They follow-up on absences, making home visits if necessary.

Information about instructional practices is lacking in many evaluations of welfare to work programs. Yet, this is the area where literacy educators make their strongest contribution. ***GAIN classrooms are characterized by a variety of teaching materials and topics, as well as by a range of teaching techniques.*** These include working with small groups of learners, whole class teaching, computer assisted instruction, individualized assignments or workbooks and cooperative learning. Students have some choices about activities each day. The researchers found an attitude of serious attention to tasks in the classes they observed. Teachers reported that they have had one to one conversations with their students about their past educational experiences and about their current goals and progress, as well as about more personal matters. Students form networks of friendship and support in the classes, and classes often celebrate special occasions, such as birthdays or graduations.

There is a general emphasis on employment preparation in all classes. Thus, all classes work on such tasks as reading and answering employment ads and completing application forms. General skills are taught in a workplace context. For example, in one ESL class students made up dialogues in response to a script about a supervisor and an employee.

The structure of curricula in GAIN reflects the spirit of innovation that is part of its success. Programs offered include: 1) VABE (Vocational Adult Basic Education); 2) concurrent vocational and academic classes for those in ABE, ESL or GED programs and 3) an Alternative Learning Services Lab for those with learning disabilities.

VABE at the observed site served 32 students and is staffed by a teacher, teacher's aide and a job developer. VABE students are screened for motivation and basic skills before admission, and are referred either directly from GAIN or by ABE, GED and ESL instructors at the center. The first three weeks are spent working on academic and basic keyboarding skills. Language instruction centers on Business English. Math skills are taught from a consumer math perspective. Materials include a variety of software packages, textbooks, newspaper articles, etc. Again, strong bonds develop between students, who remarked on the peer support they receive. After the first three weeks, the VABE classroom becomes a home base, while students spend more and more of their time in office systems classes. Students remain in VABE 24 weeks and can earn up to 15 different office skills certificates during this time. Data for 1994 show that 54 students completed the program and 31 were enrolled at the year's end. Of the remaining 14, only four were dropped for reasons that do not permit them to return. Thirty four of the 54 students who completed obtained jobs at an average wage of $6.25 per hour. Twelve completers went on to other programs.

Students in ABE or GED, or occasionally ESL, take concurrent vocational classes, with the proportion becoming more vocational as time goes on. Two-thirds of the students at the site observed were enrolled in both vocational and traditional adult education classes. Multiple components of vocational classes cover such topics as typing, filing, use of office machines and telephone skills. Students undertake job simulations as part of the curriculum. Computer use is prominent. Students are enrolled for six months and can earn up to 22 certificates. Each day features a period devoted to changing topics such as creating a "career portfolio", dressing for work, etc. A premium on cooperation and self-help among students marks the classes. After five months, students begin their job search. Data indicates that 30 have found jobs as of August 1994 at an average wage of $5.80. Ten students were receptionists, several were customer service representatives and clerks. The office skills instructor, a friend of hers and the site's job developer were reportedly responsible for two-thirds of placements.

Quint's research was conducted when JOBS was in place. She reports that the changed position of education in new welfare legislation has altered the negotiating position of educators in the service provider partnership of GAIN. The result is a major increase in initial assignment to job search, reversing the proportion of referrals under GAIN (from 70% to education first and 30% to job search to the opposite). This has affected not only the flow of students but the attendance based formula, the major source for teacher salaries. In addition, it has resulted in a less mixed student population, as those better prepared and more motivated are sent to job search. The relationship between DSS and education providers has become less a partnership and more a conflict, while the mutually supportive relationships at the level of the site remain cooperative. Quint reports the underpinnings of the disagreement between educators and DSS, one that resounds through adult education at this time:

> ***In a larger sense, the parties are divided about who should receive education services and what the larger purpose of education in a welfare to work program should be. DSS' current position is that such services are appropriate, but for a residual group of welfare recipients who are incapable of holding any job at all without this aid. The educational administrators, while accepting DSS' emphasis on employment as the criterion of GAIN success, believe that clients equipped with better basic and vocational skills will be better able to find jobs in the first place, and will be better able to keep the jobs they find. (40)***

2. Brooklyn College BEGIN Work Study Program

This program is one of 12 specifically designed for welfare recipients in New York City who have limited English language skills or lack a high school diploma or GED, initially funded through EDGE (Education for Gainful Employment, New York State's counterpart to GAIN). Begin Employment, Gain Independence Now (BEGIN) is a New York City JOBS program. BEGIN programs in New York City include: 1) BEGIN Language programs that provide up to 28 weeks of courses in ESL and basic education in the native language; 2) BEGIN Work/Study, programs comprised of 10 weeks of work experience and 10 of instruction in ABE for those with TABE scores of below 8 or 9th grade; and 3) BEGIN GED programs (13 week programs intended to serve students with TABE scores at or above 9th grade but without high school diplomas. BEGIN programs are directly managed by the Office of Employment Services (OES) of the New York City Human Resources Administration, which is responsible for public assistance.

Features emphasized in BEGIN programs include: conjoined education and work experience (except in GED programs); contextualized curriculum; time limits; emphasis on short term education, not GED attainment; numerical goals for job placement and next step activities and job developers on staff. In 1994, numerical goals were 5% job placement and 50% movement to next step activities; for 1995, this was changed to 10% and 50% respectively.

Creation of the BEGIN partnership with City University of New York was initially responsive to the members of the city's literacy community. However, there was considerable conflict between teachers at education programs and HRA and OES staff at the service delivery level. Teachers felt the latter knew little about education, cared little about clients and believed most clients could work. They also questioned the availability of above poverty wage jobs for welfare recipients. The Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) of OES, on the other hand, felt educators had little understanding of or support for welfare reform, its political context, the importance of employment outcomes, and the legitimacy of a work requirement. There was little common ground until a new BEGIN administrator with a background in adult education was hired who took steps to resolve this conflict. The subsequent revision of BEGIN philosophy and mission and a number of other changes resulted in more support for the program among both adult educators and OES staff.

How to prepare students with relatively low academic skills for the workplace is the central focus of the Brooklyn College BEGIN program. Instruction that builds academic skills in the context of learning about an occupation chosen from four clusters guides the program design. Health care, child care, clerical and exploratory/nontraditional clusters offer opportunities to learn about work both in the classroom and through short-term unpaid work experience. Over the 20 weeks of the program, students alternate one week of academic skills instruction with a week of work experiences in municipal and nonprofit worksites in their occupational areas. Discussion and review of work site experiences is an important part of the curriculum, while the work site experience provides an addition to student resumes. Two program job developers helps students find regular paid employment upon completion.

A particularly successful cluster is the child care training, which offers the options of three possible outcomes: work in unionized public day care centers, in private day care and as family care providers. Child care provides a career in which many women on welfare have considerable experience and knowledge. This familiarity supports their academic learning. It also offers a career ladder, particularly for those who have high school diplomas and typically find work in public day care centers. Through union reimbursement for partial tuition and other programs, they can acquire the credits to move up the career ladder in increments to full time teacher. Though entry level salaries are low, the potential for advancing is present, a feature not often associated with entry level jobs.

At the BEGIN work study site in Brooklyn, teachers decided on occupational clusters and curriculum content. Staff development and technical assistance for teachers who designed curricula, as well as paid time to research the occupations they had chosen, were also features that supported teacher investment in the program. The program operated four hours per day, five days a week, all year round, with periodic breaks. Students received training related expenses, such as transportation and child care allowances.

The Brooklyn program agreed to serve 1300 students a year. At any given time, about 440 are enrolled. Students are predominantly women of color (69% African American or Afro-Caribbean and 26% Latino). Reading scores of participants show that 60% scored below the 5th grade level, while only 12 percent read at ninth grade or higher. Teachers note that their students tend to lack self-esteem, and that many have had serious problems, such as being victims of rape, incest or abuse. Others are having difficulty with children or with housing. However, students generally are interested in learning, worked hard, and cooperated in class. Many have had the experience of holding jobs for short periods, and believe they need more education to succeed with employers; in fact, three quarters want to continue their education after BEGIN, rather than seek employment (55-56).

The teaching staff had experience in teaching adults and was multicultural and multiracial. Relative to other positions in adult education, BEGIN jobs featured competitive salaries and full time work, along with a full fringe benefit package. Although the program lacks a counselor, job developers and CSRs assist students with next step activities and maintain

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

outcome data. CSRs also monitor attendance and related sanctions and training related allowances, a function that accounts for most of their interaction with students. Perhaps because of this, along with their lack of education and counseling expertise, they are not held in the high esteem that ESWs appear to have been in the GAIN sites.

Students referred to BEGIN at Brooklyn College participate in nine days of assessment and orientation, where they are not only tested on basic skills but also participate in exercises to build self esteem and mutual support. Long and short term goals are developed, and students participate in other activities designed to prepare them for the program.

In the classroom, four themes emerged as prominent: 1) a strong emphasis on preparation for work; 2) sensitivity and responsiveness to students' interests and to their varied cultural backgrounds; 3) teacher efforts to build student self esteem and create an atmosphere of mutual support in the classroom 4) and use of a variety of materials and instructional approaches (64). Writing is emphasized across clusters.

Observed classes featured examples of contextualized curricula; in a health class, the day began with a spelling quiz on health related words, and then moved on to a reading describing occupations in the medical field. Comments about salaries listed for various jobs were used as the basis for a math lesson. In another class, in the exploratory/nontraditional cluster, students read a chapter from a book of stories about women in nontraditional careers, discussed a list of questions about the reading in small groups and as a class, and were given a related homework assignment. Teachers use a wide variety of materials, from novels to job applications, and also draw on student writings, guest speakers and community resources for lessons. Student progress and assessment is judged by quantitative and qualitative means. The TABE is used as a pre and post test, along with an HRA work readiness skills assessment. Teacher observation, student portfolios and student self assessment are also used.

One strength of the Brooklyn College BEGIN program is its well developed strategies for working with a variety of literacy levels in the same classroom. These include: providing information in a variety of ways (visual, reading, listening, hands-on); having students keep journals in which they record their thoughts and observations and to which teachers respond; encouraging collaborative learning; opportunities to demonstrate learning through hands-on projects that can be completed in several different ways; evaluation of each project based on its adherence to instruction and on the teacher's judgement of the student's performance, on a scale of 1-5.

Among 137 participants at Brooklyn BEGIN who moved on to a next step activity within a six month period, 10 % chose job club, 43% enrolled in non-OES sponsored training and 16% entered a personal care training program sponsored by the Department of Aging and OES. Thirty one percent entered non-OES education programs offering ABE or GED instruction. In a report on BEGIN programs at three CUNY campuses, the 1994 outcome figures were 6% placed in jobs and only 23% moving to next step activities. The failure of the program to achieve better next step outcomes may result form the low literacy levels of participants. As we have seen, ABE instruction and even GED attainment, particularly if offered for too little time, are often not enough to secure jobs or to move to the next instructional level or program.

3. Philadelphia's Community Women's Education Project

The significant feature of this program is its ability to adhere to a well articulated philosophy that emphasizes questioning of existing political and social conditions while working successfully within the JOBS system with JTPA programs and the local PIC. As a result, CWEP has been able to convince the PIC of the validity of its approach despite its ideological opposition. Given the philosophical and political differences often articulated by adult education programs when presented with the operating principles of JOBS, this is a hopeful achievement.

Features that characterize the CWEP include: a clearly feminist and multicultural ideology; an emphasis on personal and political empowerment of students; a participatory and non-hierarchical approach to teaching and learning; a focus on writing as a means of expression in all aspects of curriculum; a belief in the value of community college rather than short-term skills training for program graduates and a strong political advocacy role (85-6). CWEP operates both a Workstart program, with instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, career planning, computer literacy, test taking skills and a wide range of electives and a College Program, which offers on-site college courses taught by faculty of the Community College of Philadelphia. Students in the former program are encouraged to increase their academic achievement and to enroll in vocational training at CCP or elsewhere; students in the latter are offered tutoring and academic counseling to help them transfer to the CCP main campus. Students in both programs receive extensive support services, including on-site childcare. PIC referred students receive training related expenses to cover transportation and lunch. Workstart is a full year program, with a class schedule like that of college.

The teaching staff for the JOBS classes of Workstart is predominantly African American (three out of four teachers). Teachers espouse the pedagogy of Paulo Friere, the Brazilian educator for whom literacy is a political process of consciousness raising, of naming and reading the world. While the teaching staff is part-time, the program employs a full time curriculum coordinator, who is also responsible for staff development. A student services unit includes two counselors and an intern.

The philosophy of the program is evident not only in its structure, but in the choices it makes about learning that satisfy its own goals and those of the JOBS initiative. For example, although required to use a standardized test for assessment, the program staff selected the ABLE, which is untimed. While the employment focus of JOBS demands a greater emphasis on the mechanics of writing than the program would prefer, the staff responded by motivating and preparing students to be their own proofreaders, fostering control over their work. As in all of the programs discussed, a variety of teaching methods and materials are used, but the content is

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

often more explicitly feminist, multicultural or political. For example, career development includes a discussion of discrimination in the labor market. Students also take a leadership course that features a hands-on approach to fostering institutional change. ***CWEP curricula and teaching emphasizes student choices and goals, participatory methods and student self-help along with willingness to discuss differences, challenge authority, and understand and respond to complex political issues.*** Follow up to attendance problems is conducted by Workstart staff, who believe that they are able to help most students before they "fall through the cracks." Although the program uses a pre and post test, most assessment takes the form of student portfolios, teacher observation and student self assessment.

CWEP's contract with PIC demands that 49 of the 81 PIC students in Workstart complete the program and move on to approved next step activity. Planning for this takes place early in classes and individual meetings with the training advocate. Nurse's aide and clerical training are currently popular choices. Data on 71 PIC students in 1992-1993 indicate that 35% chose PIC funded training; 15% went to non-PIC education and training programs, including GED programs; 24% chose the Community College of Philadelphia and 3 % went to work. The remainder did not select a next step due to physical or mental health problems, family emergencies or moving. While CWEP advocate for long term education and training, they recognize that this prospect is daunting, frightening, financially difficult and not encouraged by PIC staff. They have responded by investigating short term programs fully, and meeting with PIC staff to review options and update lists of quality programs. "When CWEP's goal of client empowerment conflicts with their beliefs in long term training, respecting the client's preference is ultimately their most important consideration (104)".

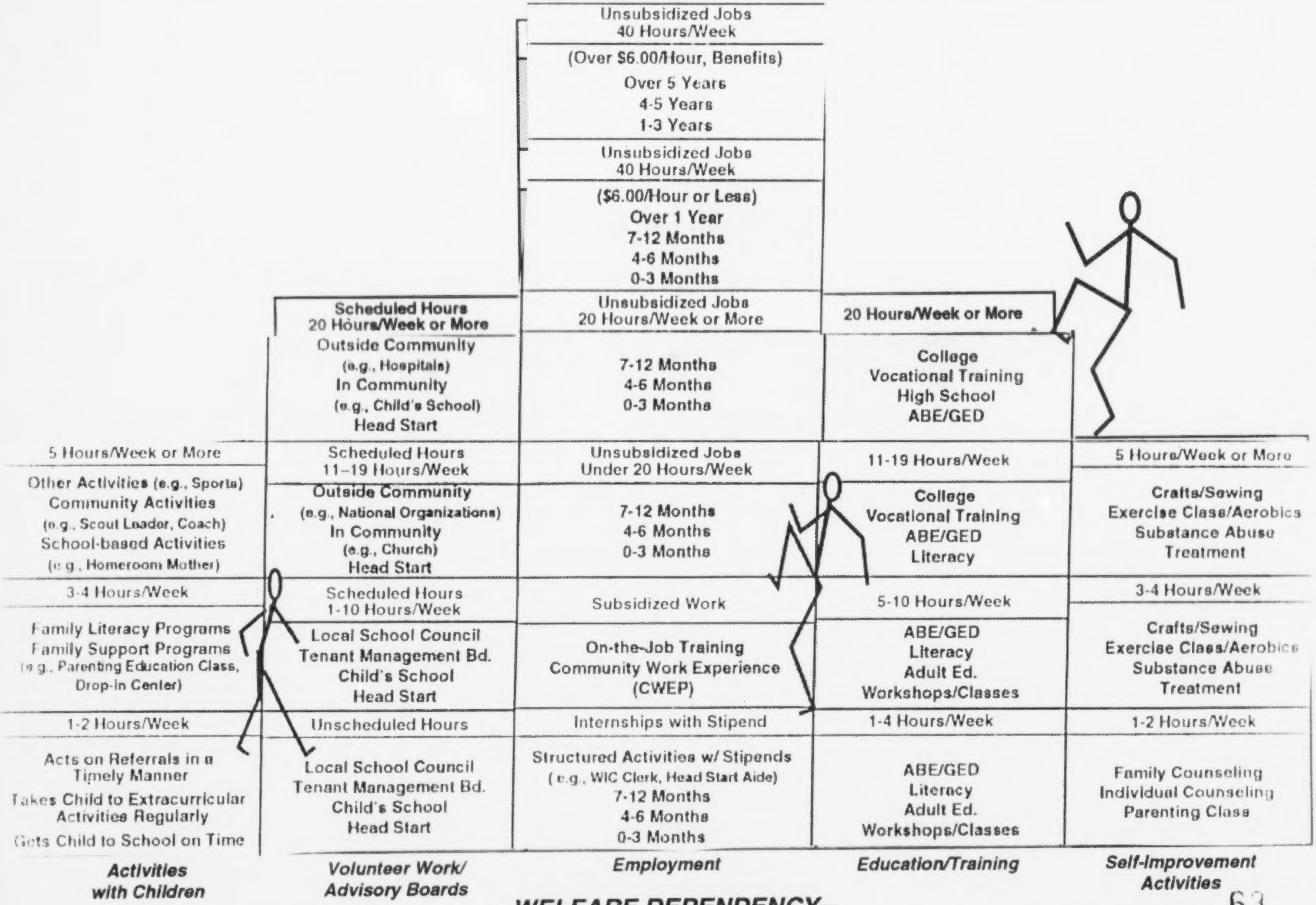
In its advocacy role, the CWEP has challenged the PIC's preference for short term training with data showing that, out of a sample of 34 Workstart students, all of whom had been employed in the past and had participated in training, only 3 had secured employment in fields related to training at wages that did not require supplemental welfare assistance. As a result of its lobbying and supportive information, the PIC lifted its 30 percent limit on community college enrollment for Workstart students, allowing all feeder programs to enroll in CCP vocational programs as a JOBS activity.

4. Project Match

Project Match, while not an adult education program, has gained national recognition for its recognition of and responsiveness to the actual experiences of individuals who move from welfare to work. Education is among the strategies that may be chosen in moving from welfare to work, and educators can learn from how Project Match situates that choice for clients.

Project Match serves the hardest to reach and employ among the public assistance population. Its participants, residents of the Cabrini-Green housing project in Chicago, are 99% African American unmarried women, 60% of whom are under 25 at the point of enrollment. Only 55% come into the program with any work experience at all and 58% grew up in homes

Incremental Ladder to Economic Independence



Activities with Children	Volunteer Work/ Advisory Boards	Employment	Education/Training	Self-Improvement Activities
		Unsubsidized Jobs 40 Hours/Week		
		(Over $6.00/Hour, Benefits) Over 5 Years 4-5 Years 1-3 Years		
		Unsubsidized Jobs 40 Hours/Week		
		($6.00/Hour or Less) Over 1 Year 7-12 Months 4-6 Months 0-3 Months		
	Scheduled Hours 20 Hours/Week or More	Unsubsidized Jobs 20 Hours/Week or More	20 Hours/Week or More	
	Outside Community (e.g., Hospitals) In Community (e.g., Child's School) Head Start	7-12 Months 4-6 Months 0-3 Months	College Vocational Training High School ABE/GED	
5 Hours/Week or More	Scheduled Hours 11–19 Hours/Week	Unsubsidized Jobs Under 20 Hours/Week	11-19 Hours/Week	5 Hours/Week or More
Other Activities (e.g., Sports) Community Activities (e.g., Scout Leader, Coach) School-based Activities (e.g., Homeroom Mother)	Outside Community (e.g., National Organizations) In Community (e.g., Church) Head Start	7-12 Months 4-6 Months 0-3 Months	College Vocational Training ABE/GED Literacy	Crafts/Sewing Exercise Class/Aerobics Substance Abuse Treatment
3-4 Hours/Week	Scheduled Hours 1-10 Hours/Week	Subsidized Work	5-10 Hours/Week	3-4 Hours/Week
Family Literacy Programs Family Support Programs (e.g., Parenting Education Class, Drop-In Center)	Local School Council Tenant Management Bd. Child's School Head Start	On-the-Job Training Community Work Experience (CWEP)	ABE/GED Literacy Adult Ed. Workshops/Classes	Crafts/Sewing Exercise Class/Aerobics Substance Abuse Treatment
1-2 Hours/Week	Unscheduled Hours	Internships with Stipend	1-4 Hours/Week	1-2 Hours/Week
Acts on Referrals in a Timely Manner Takes Child to Extracurricular Activities Regularly Gets Child to School on Time	Local School Council Tenant Management Bd. Child's School Head Start	Structured Activities w/ Stipends (e.g., WIC Clerk, Head Start Aide) 7-12 Months 4-6 Months 0-3 Months	ABE/GED Literacy Adult Ed. Workshops/Classes	Family Counseling Individual Counseling Parenting Class

--WELFARE DEPENDENCY--

Copyright © 1991, 1997 by Project Match - Families in Transition Association

supported by welfare. ***Project Match has developed an individualized, human development approach to welfare reform, using an "incremental ladder" which reflects the broad range of activities and institutions that are part of workforce preparation.*** The Match model recognizes the uneven process of moving back and from welfare to work, and takes this into account. ***They suggest that for many participants who lack a GED or basic skills, only experiencing work in low paying jobs without opportunity for advancement motivates individuals to maintain their commitment to education Such experiences suggest that AFDC recipients should not be forced to go to school when they want to work, nor prevented by lack of financial support from seeking more education when they desire it.***

Other features of the Project Match approach include job development (rather than individualized job search) which functions as "proxy networks" that can inform, socialize and vouch for employees; providing post-placement follow up and assistance, to address the frequent initial job loss among the majority of participants; developing a long-term, individualized approach that has increase likelihood of employment by 47% and average wages by 23% and identifying options other than work and school, particularly as first step activities, for those who fail to make progress.

- **Project Match emphasizes building the lower rungs of the ladder of personal and career advancement so that recipients have a broader array of meaningful and realistic first steps that will count as legitimate efforts toward economic independence (6).**

Such activities will involve skills, competencies and time commitments that need to be mastered by the individuals and that are conceptually linked to job readiness. For example, consistently getting a child to school on time is preparation for getting to work. These activities must also require increasingly work-like skills and dispositions (for example, moving from getting a child to school on time to unscheduled volunteering at the school and then to scheduled volunteering). Participation in these activities must be measurable and verifiable. Implementation on a large scale would require a range of partnerships among schools, Head Start Centers and other institutions and agencies that are part of the lives of AFDC recipients (Herr and Halpern 1994; Olson et. Al, 1990).

5. America Works

America Works is a for-profit company that collects $5000 to $5500 from government agencies for each client placed (Selz, 1996:1). It emphasizes job search first, and close attention to post placement follow-up. Over the past ten years, America Works has placed 5000 welfare clients in jobs, and 85% of these have remained employed.

America Works clients spend their first week in reemployment orientation, "a kind of temps boot camp that teaches grooming, interview skills, and basic job requirements, such as punctuality," (Pooley, 1994:10) Those who are late must go to the end of a two month waiting list. Two or more weeks are spent on job skills, but not training. Founder and Director Peter Cove believes that education as a strategy to move welfare recipients to work has failed, and that entry level skills can be learned on the job. Cove claims that the failure to get jobs results from a lack of connections, not a lack of skills and training. America Works provides the missing connections though its network of employer clients, who pay $6-9 an hour for well screened eager workers and a tax credit. New employees stay on payroll for four months, and then become permanent if their work is satisfactory.

America Works uses corporate representatives who act as "guardian angels" for program participants after placement, addressing any problems that present obstacles to continued employment. ***The program's philosophy is that work itself prepares people to move from welfare to work, and that the transformative power of work motivates individuals. Motivation, in turn, is a function of opportunity.***

The model does not claim to be the answer for "hard core welfare dependents" nor can it handle the volume of people required to begin work under new legislation. Its success supports the research of workplace ethnographers who assert that people can often do jobs for which credentials pose unnecessary barriers, and that people learn job skills best while working on paid jobs. Like other small scale programs, America Works does an impressive job with a well funded program that serves a particular part of the welfare population. Its main contribution to placement success is its network of employers.

6. The Center for Employment Training

The CET has focused on training and placement for individuals who lack formal education and English language and/or literacy skills. It provides a wide array of training services for employers across California and throughout the West.

The CET approach has achieved success for those considered the truly hard to employ, and treats trainees as workers. The program features open entry and exit and never "creams." Trainees initially work on English language remediation and related skills, after which courses in English and math are available. Instructor-counselors in the program come from the private sector, and the program maintains contact with employers to whom it sends trainees. Some of these companies provide personnel to assist with mock interviews.

Training uses a functional context approach in an environment simulating with workplace. Job and basic skills are integrated. Progress is assessed on a performance basis, by demonstrated mastery of particular tasks and competencies. Students attend class six hours a day, five days a week. Some spend an additional two hours a day in ESL classes. Although students can remain in the program for as long as it takes to achieve mastery, the average training period is six months, with an additional 3 to 6 weeks for those who need ESL or basic education.

Since its inception in 1967, the CET has provided a wide range of pre and post placement support services, including on-site child care. As of 1992, the CET had trained and found employment for 53,000 people. Best known as the only program in the Rockefeller Single Parent Demonstration Project to have large positive impacts on employment and earnings sustained over five years, it is widely acknowledged as one of the few success stories in employment training. The CET was also the only successful site out of 134 in JOB START, a federally funded employment and training program for youth. Average costs per enrollee for CET programs range from $2700 to $4800 for 1985-86.

The CET also meets with employers and equipment specialists to ensure that its equipment reflects the workplace. Trainees proceed at their own pace toward completion of training that reflects employer needs. After placement, individuals are assisted by teams of instructors and counselors who determine social service and other post placement needs. Graduates may return at any time for placement services (Harrison, 1995).

As a Community Development Corporation, the CET has developed a variety of subsidiaries and operations, which support services for participants and connections to employment. The CET has scored at or near the top on all measures of program success, and has earned the trust it enjoys from major companies.

Conclusion

The programs reviewed here suggest the importance of diversity and innovation in addressing the multiple needs of different groups within the public assistance population. For individuals who want to work immediately, programs such as America Works can provide the links to employers willing to hire those who have demonstrated entry level skills and work readiness. These individuals acquire the opportunity to learn on the job, propounded by many to be the best training of all. For others, who have very low entry level skills, programs such as CET offer a way to bypass traditional credential and test score requirements and enter directly into education in the context of a work-like environment that provides training linked to jobs. For those not ready for programs or work, the activities proposed by Project Match can constitute the lower rungs of a ladder leading to education, training and work. Public assistance recipients who need education and/or training can receive it in a variety of innovative combinations through programs such as GAIN's VABE classes, or the BEGIN program in New York City. Finally, the experience of the CWEP in Philadelphia demonstrates that conflicting goals of adult educators and other service providers can be discussed and renegotiated to provide greater educational options for participants. Taken together, these programs demonstrate that adult education programs can and should offer many paths to work and to higher education opportunities for public assistance recipients.

References Cited

Harrison, Bennet
1995 Building Bridges: Community Development Corporations and the World of Employment Training. N.Y.: Report to the Ford Foundation.

Herr, Toby and Robert Halpern with Aimee Conrad
1991 Changing What Counts: Rethinking the Journey out of Welfare. Evanston, Illinois: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University.

Olson, Lynn, Linnea Berg and Aimee Conrad
1990 High Job Turnover among the Urban Poor: The Project Match Experience. Evanston, Illinois: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University.

Quint, Janet with Cristina DiMeo
In Press Educating Welfare Recipients for Employment and Empowerment: Case Studies of Promising Programs. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Pooley, Eric
1994 Nice Work If You Can Get It. New York Magazine 1/10/94.

Selz, Michael
1996 Teaching Job-Hunting Basics to Trim Welfare Rolls. Wall Street Journal, 10/14/96: 1, B2.

II. ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND WELFARE TO WORK PARTNERSHIPS

- **A 1992 study, "Linking Welfare and Education: A Study of New Programs in Five States", found that welfare and education agencies have experienced difficulty in working together, despite their evident willingness to do so. These difficulties are linked to differences in institutional priorities, goals, jurisdictions, clienteles, and operating procedures (Pauly and DiMeo, 1992: 2).**

- **If the goal is self-sufficiency and personal success for recipients, investments will be costly and long term, and will require education tailored to personal goals and needs of participants. On the other hand, if the goal is to produce savings in the AFDC budget, cheaper, short term programs that result in some employment but no real change in participant lives will achieve desired results. For adult educators, the dilemma is how and whether to participate in initiatives directed toward the latter strategy, while maintaining a personal and programmatic commitment to the former.**

- **Despite some attempts at coördination among adult education programs and welfare to work initiatives planned in compliance with the Personal Responsibility Act at the state level, local programs generally report a marked decrease in individuals seeking ABE and ESL instruction.**

- **For basic skills to achieve a higher profile in welfare reform in all States it will be necessary to identify successful program models-both stand alone and integrated programs. "Success" must be defined as reaching prescribed benchmarks - including meeting qualifying criteria to advance along the path to employment and/or securing actual placements in jobs - and must be backed by accurate data in sufficiently large numbers to make the case. These models will have to represent urban, suburban and rural populations, as well as programs for recipients with disabilities and those needing English language instruction. These models will need to be showcased at national, regional, state and local technical assistance meetings to reinforce the message that education remains a vital factor in welfare to work policy (Murphy, 1997).**

- **If we are to fight poverty among our students, rather than fighting the poor, adult educators need to be part of a training and education system that offers continuous opportunities to individuals and that helps shape economic policy at the community, state and national level.**

- **Toward this end, adult educators, training and service providers for dislocated workers and for the economically disadvantaged must join with School to Work efforts and programs that educate and train incumbent workers to build comprehensive workforce development systems (Jurmo 1996).**

JOBS Partnerships

The implementation of JOBS, as a partnership between the federal government and the states, increased demand for education services as part of the contribution of states to the initiative. Thus, the impetus for education partnerships came from welfare agencies who sought to enroll greater numbers of adults in basic education programs and who requested such services from participating education programs as monitoring and reporting attendance and outcomes. If adult education programs, already underfunded and oversubscribed and sometimes with long waiting lists, did not receive commensurate additional resources, these demands came as a burden and imposition. According to a more recent study of JOBS, greatly increased referrals of people on AFDC to adult education programs, absent any contribution to funding those programs, "limits the nature and extent of coordination" (Pauly and DiMeo 1995).

Chronic issues within adult education presented particular problems for the partnership between educators and welfare agencies that JOBS encourages (14-20). ***Attendance emerged as "the biggest issue" for welfare/education programs.*** Adult education providers have traditionally served a voluntary population. Programs make great efforts to meet the needs of participants who have the option to vote with their feet. Moreover, adults often juggle education classes with multiple and pressing responsibilities, such as caring for children or elderly relatives, earning money, keeping appointments, etc. Attendance is often erratic for voluntary participants in basic education programs, and for those attending because of mandates from welfare agencies, may be more so. It is hypothesized that these adults have not made the decision to fit school into their lives and may experience more difficulty with regular attendance than the voluntary participants.

The mandatory nature of welfare to work efforts under JOBS and the resulting necessity for monitoring participation created not only an administrative burden but also a political problem for adult education programs. Instructors and program administrators, who chose the field of adult education in order to assist adults who have decided to seek education now felt as if they were asked to police the participation of those for whom absences can have serious consequence. Many adult education providers regularly follow up with learners who miss class, and interviews with providers found widespread agreement that such follow up improves participation. The difficulty with follow up of JOBS participants occurred because of lack of resources for staff time to do so and because of the threat of sanctions for those not in attendance. However, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services JOBS program regulations required each state to submit reports on the participation of individuals in JOBS, including the number of hours per week they attend education programs. Funding was contingent on such reporting, and education components were among the few activities with the potential to meet the standard of an average of 20 hours per week. This embroiled education program staff in a high stakes administrative responsibility, and one that was often contrary to practice and policy in the field.

Deeper differences occurred over the mission of adult education, and how this is achieved. ***For educators and adult learners, the purpose of literacy is wider than immediate, often low level employment. In Equipped for the Future, for example, learners define broad goals in the area of parenting and citizenship as well as work. Many adult education programs try to develop curriculum and assessment materials that reflect these goals, and to allow students themselves to determine when they have achieved the level of literacy they need.*** For welfare/education efforts, the lack of clear standards for progress and exit are problematic, and curriculum not explicitly tailored to employment may not be seen as relevant. In contrast, literacy practitioners experience the demands of welfare agencies as narrow and oppressive:

> We [literacy practitioners] tend to regard welfare's demands as an unwelcome intrusion into the educational process, but they are not separate from the literacy program. Whatever our intentions are, literacy funding is primarily directed not at providing people with an education, but at getting people off welfare rolls. It's aimed not so much at education, but at re-education; not so much at giving people the tools to better control their own destiny, but rather to convince them that they have no choice but to take a job, no matter how bad, no matter how low-paying, no matter how personal unfulfilling (Gordon 1995: 13-14).

Gordon captures the difference in goals of adult educators and the targeted outcomes of welfare reform. These mirror the policy choices which researchers have observed among short and long term strategies for moving from welfare to work.

Among operational issues that emerge from studies of collaboration under JOBS are attention to indicators of program quality. Welfare officials and staff feel that program quality is the responsibility of educators. Although program quality is not easy to assess, data on student views of the program, working conditions of teachers, drop out rates, outcomes and other features can serve as indicators.

- **The profile of adults on public assistance who need literacy instruction suggests that programs may need to add support staff and services to accommodate this population, and that curricula be adjusted to include more life management, parenting and employment skills (Pauly and DiMeo 1995: 11-13).**

Other recurring concerns for the partnerships encouraged by JOBS included difficulties associated with planning for unknown numbers of participants, and diverse operational issues resulting from the variety of education providers (community colleges, community based organizations, school districts, etc.). Redundant testing, by both welfare agency and education provider was another frequent problem. Diagnosis of learning disabilities and whether or not JOBS participants should be "main streamed" into existing classes or attend separate ones designed for them also emerged as issues across the five states studied.

- **Funding is critical to resolution of the difficulties experienced by adult education programs and participants in their collaboration for jobs. It is a "prime mover" that affects the capacity of education programs to serve welfare recipients and that strongly shapes welfare/education collaboration (Pauly and DiMeo: 33).**

- **Researchers point to the need to share models of successful program innovations among providers, and to service gaps that hamper meeting the needs of public assistance recipients. These include that lack of enough English as a Second Language programs and variability in the quality and services of education programs within states (DiMeo and Pauly, 37-38). The study emphasizes the importance of negotiations and joint ownership between welfare and education officials at both state and local levels (45).**

Regarding the construction of linkages among adult education providers and other employment service organizations at state and local levels, both the extent of joint ownership and its results are mixed. As is clear from Grubb's study of coordination among vocational education, Job Training Partnership Act and welfare to work programs, there is no national direction or pattern to such coordination (1990). Aptly titled Case Studies for Order Amidst Complexity, the study found different strategies for coordination in the seven states studied, and within the states as well.

Adult Education and the Implementation of the Personal Responsibility Act

Post-JOBS, how is adult education intersecting with state plans to implement the 1996 legislation? ***According to a recent survey of all 50 states, to which replies from 25 states were received, only 6 states have directly involved adult educators in planning the response to the Personal Responsibility Act (Murphy, 1997).*** In 16 states, adult educators reported that they had no role in their state plan, and in 3 of the 9 remaining states, adult education was represented only indirectly. In only 6 of the responding states was a waiver in place which allows for continued use of ABE or ESL instruction. In the other 19, participation in these adult education activities will not count as part of the 20 hours of mandated work activity. ***Fourteen states reported a decline in enrollment in ABE/ESL programs, ranging from a 10 to 40% drop.***

Activities reported among the 25 states responding included plans to combine vocational training, basic skills and work, using a combination of JOBS/TANF, Perkins and Adult education dollars (Washington), and interagency agreements supported by funding, for ABE activities, including assessment, tuition and basic skills services to welfare recipients (Ohio, Arizona, Alabama, Texas, Tennessee). In Oregon, the level of integration of adult education into welfare planning is high, and appears to be based on "appropriate basic skills instruction driven by life and work contexts", a work and learn approach, rather than the idea of staying in education until "fixed." New York also has funding to continue its EDGE program, which offers work and education in varied combinations (Murphy, 1997). It is not clear, at least in the New York case, how and when participants will be chosen for these activities. Preliminary plans for

New York City, for example, stress participation in the Work Experience program (WEP or workfare) and job search prior to any educational activities. Although a case challenging this practice upheld the right of public assistance recipients to an individual assessment and to attendance in education programs based on the results (Greenhouse, 1997: B4), the New York State plan again renders this ruling moot.

There also remains uncertainty over how the 20% who will be allowed to take part in "vocational educational training" is to be computed, as well as how such training is defined. In New York State, some advocates argue that participation goals are so high that, considering the percentage of people who clearly cannot participate in work due to various disabling conditions, meeting the numbers will demand that every able bodied recipient is sent to work or workfare (Yankwitt, personal communication).

The survey shows that, while the trend toward workfare and job search first continues, the role of basic skills instruction in welfare reform is less clear cut (Murphy, 1997). The centrality of work as an activity or as content in basic skills programs connected to welfare reform varies, and this variation may be related to the organization of basic skills instruction. States in which basic skills instruction is delivered by postsecondary, vocational or large intermediate institutions are more likely to have the scale and resources necessary to link education to work. Such facilities are better able to hire job development staff and to have the administrative capability of overseeing work placements. States where basic skills instruction is in the hands of local school districts or a variety of community based organizations have a more difficult time connecting school to work, providing a full range of job services and offering concurrent, rather than sequential services. However, at least in New York City, there is widespread interest among community based organizations in becoming work sites for WEP, and in developing coordinated work and learning for ABE and ESL students. Indeed, there is impressive experience among CBOs in carrying out such programs. The policy change that would facilitate this was recently passed by the New York State legislature. (It should also be noted that a number of churches and not-for-profits in New York City have decided not to participate as WEP worksites to protest the labor conditions surrounding workfare).

- **For basic skills to achieve a higher profile in welfare reform in all States it will be necessary to identify successful program models-both stand alone and integrated programs. "Success" must be defined as reaching prescribed benchmarks - including meeting qualifying criteria to advance along the path to employment and/or securing actual placements in jobs - and must be backed by accurate data in sufficiently large numbers to make the case. These models will have to represent urban, suburban and rural populations, as well as programs for recipients with disabilities and those needing English language instruction. These models will need to be showcased at national, regional, state and local technical assistance meeting to reinforce the message that education remains a vital factor in welfare to work policy (Murphy, 1997).**

The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy is currently working on a national study of impact and outcomes, as well as on an assessment study at the University of Tennessee. Equipped for the Future plans to design assessment and outcome measures that respond to the goals articulated by adult learners. A practitioner who has worked with refugees and other welfare recipients as both an adult educator and as a liaison/troubleshooter among adult educators, the refugee community and social service departments, reminds us that unless adult educators can demonstrate the benefits derived from participation in their programs, with both qualitative and quantitative data, they are likely to get "cornered" into having to justify programs in *only* employment related outcomes (Marshall, personal communication 1/21/97).

- **Despite the mixed record of coordination among adult education programs and welfare to work initiatives planned in compliance with the Personal Responsibility Act at the state level, local programs generally report a marked decrease in individuals seeking ABE and ESL instruction.**

For example, in New York City the Literacy Assistance Center Hotline, which refers individuals to programs reports the numbers of these callers reduced, while the number seeking GED programs has risen. The Hotline Manager interprets this as work and training related; increasingly, a GED is the minimum education required for work and for many training programs. The Riverside Language Program, which has historically had to turn away hundreds from the full time English classes it provides, is barely filling classes these days.

In Massachusetts, the number of welfare recipients seeking basic education has also fallen (Reuys, 1996:1). According to Boston literacy providers, this is because "education is no longer encouraged--and is in fact often actively discouraged-for recipients of public assistance in Massachusetts." As a result, the number of classes and slots at adult education programs has fallen, and the kinds of education that is supported is restricted in both the length of time students are allowed to attend and the kinds of programs that are approved. Finally, the new work requirement is forcing many students to quit programs in which they are already enrolled, and discourages them from starting education programs:

> ***. . .adult basic education programs are hurt by the loss of students and funding. But more importantly, the new welfare policies are doing damage to families. Some are winding up in shelters or on the streets; the number of young unsupervised "latch key" kids has gone up because their mothers are required to work; visits to soup kitchens and food pantries are increasing; children with disabilities are no longer able to get the care they need. Thousands of families are being hurt by a punitive welfare policy that deprives adults, mostly single mothers of the support needed for finding a route to long-term economic independence. The war on poverty has been replaced by a war on the poor (Reuys, 1997:4)***

The Future of Adult Education and Welfare Reform Partnerships

- **If we are to fight poverty among our students, rather than fighting the poor, adult educators need to be part of a training and education system that offers continuous opportunities to individuals and that helps shape economic policy at the community, state and national level.**

- **Toward this end, adult educators, training and service providers for dislocated workers and for the economically disadvantaged must join with School to Work efforts and programs that educate and train incumbent workers to build comprehensive workforce development systems (Jurmo 1996).**

Statewide comprehensive education and training systems would provide ongoing opportunities for the lifelong learning now considered necessary for adapting to rapid change in the workforce, the economy and the processing of information in the information age. Individuals would experience this structure as a ladder of opportunity that provides flexible learning in a variety of formats and settings. The lower rungs would include activities advocated by Project Match, basic education and GED preparation, while the higher rungs would follow Grubb's model and offer apprenticeships, workplace education in team contexts, certificate training, and finally college credit courses leading to AA, BA and graduate degrees.

Many of the "pieces" of this system are in place: adult education programs of various kinds, technical training offered by employers and in certificate programs, union education programs, JTPA programs, etc. The national direction for bringing these together in a system is present in such initiatives as America Reads and the President's proposals to make the first two years of college accessible to everyone. In this respect, the insistence that parents, as First Teachers, receive education services as part of America Reads is a step in exactly the right direction.

The example of the Center for Employment Training directs us to additional alliances. As a community development corporation, the CET attempts to link local economic development planning and projects with employment training. As such, it has expanded its network of employers and its job placement capacity. Community or regional development linkages can also include adult educators in sectoral initiatives, which take the form of targeting critical industries and building relationships among employers, unions, educators and others to support and develop these industries as vehicles for development and employment. Both sectoral and community development strategies can include creating systemic change within an industry or community that addresses issues of job quality, child care, career opportunities and persistent discrimination (see, for example, Clark et. al., 1995: 7, 8, 15-17; Neighborhood Works and Third Force, 1997).

This larger vision for adult education partnerships places the field within the contexts of state workforce development systems, national education policy, community development alliances and sectoral initiatives.

References Cited

Gordon, John
1995 Welfare and Literacy. Literacy Harvest 4, 1: 11-14.

Greenhouse, Steven
1997 Assess Workfare Recipients, Judge Tells City. New York Times 3/26/97: B4.

Grubb, Norton W., Cynthia Brown and John Lederer
1990 Case Studies for Order Amidst Complexity: the Status of Coordination among Vocational Education, Job Training Partnership Act and Welfare to Work Programs. Report to U.S. Secretary of Education and U.S. Secretary of Labor. Berkeley, Ca.: National Center for Research on Vocational Education.

Jurmo, Paul
1996 State-Level Policy for Workplace Basic Education: What Advocates are Saying. New Brunswick, N.J.: Learning Partnerships Inc.

Murphy, Garrett
1997 Department of Health and Human Services Status Report from Policy Analyst for National Educational Professional Development Consortium: 1/10/97.

Neighborhood Works and Third Force Magazine
1997 Dollars and Direct Action. Development and Organizing: How Can They Work Better? How Can They Work Together? Special Section of Neighborhood Works, March/April 1977 with Third Force Magazine. Chicago: Center for Neighborhood Technology.

Pauly, Edward with Cristina DiMeo
1995 The JOBS Evaluation: Adult Education for People on AFDC: A Synthesis of Research. Washington, D.C.: Us. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Reuys, Steve
1996 The Economies of SCALE: Exploring the Impact of Career Centers on ABE Programs. Boston, Massachusetts, Adult Literacy Resource Institute.
1997 Welfare's Retreat from Education; Exploring the Impact of Massachusetts Welfare Reform on Adult Basic Education. All Write News January 1997 1-4.

PART THREE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research reviewed in Part One of this report builds a case for the complexity and diversity of the problems confronted by public assistance recipients with low literacy. The program experiences reported in Part Two illustrate the ability of adult education providers to design and deliver a correspondingly wide array of paths to employment and participation goals. Although the research reviewed here complicates the often simplistic picture painted by headlines, some relatively straightforward findings emerge.

- **The participation and impact outcomes of studies of welfare to work initiatives involving education demonstrate the ability of government to design and carry out large scale programmatic changes that achieve targeted goals. What is critical is how those goals are defined and decided, and whether the short and long term consequences of such choices are fully understood.**

- **The major source of conflict between educators and social service agencies charged with implementing welfare reform has been the support of educators for human capital development approaches, and for education that encompasses much more than preparation for entry level jobs.**

While research shows that investment in longer term education, specifically post secondary education, is the clearest route to jobs that enable women to support themselves and their families without public assistance, the direction of the Personal Responsibility Act is toward immediate assignment to unpaid work experience programs, immediate job placement or short term education and training programs.

In 1990, the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce posed a choice for policymakers and employers between a low wage/low-skill or high wage/high skill response to the changing global economy. The current direction of welfare reform, emphasizing immediate unpaid work experience and short term job placement, will not lift individuals out of poverty and will further depress wages for the lowest paid American workers. This is clearly a low road solution. If current welfare reform emphasizes such strategies, how can educators who work with public assistance recipients still achieve the long term goals of their own work, the aspirations of learners in their programs and the systemic changes likely to increase education and employment opportunities for those who attend adult education programs?

PROGRAM LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research reported above, adult education programs and providers can:

- **Identify goals with their participants on public assistance and with social service agencies charged with implementing welfare reform, to clarify how they can fit into**

local and statewide welfare reform, community development and workforce development initiatives. Programs need to decide how they can best serve the population in their classes and how and whether to be part of a system that can support, augment or follow their services.

Currently, interagency cooperation seems to be at the level of occasional joint meetings, mutual letters of support for funding proposals, reporting attendance and outcome data and participant referrals.

- **If programs are to really serve the complex range of individual needs and goals that exists among public assistance recipients, cooperation needs to move to the level of team based service provision, using mechanisms such as case conferences to plan for the mix of services needed by individuals and/or groups of learners.**

- **Based on discussions with participants and staff within programs, and with other agencies, programs must identify changes in assessment, evaluation, curriculum, scheduling and staffing that would help them better serve the needs of public assistance recipients.**

The program models presented here can guide such decisions, not so much as designs to be copied directly, but as examples of how programs can serve participants, maintain their integrity and advocate for changes they believe are essential to their programs and participants.

- **Programs and practitioners should join with others who share their goals to lobby for increased resources to effectively serve those on public assistance, and for changes in policy that will facilitate such services.**

The efficacy of such actions is demonstrated by the increases in adult education funding won last year, as well as by the experience of the CWEP described above. The CWEP used data on the experiences of its participants in training programs to win the right for those who elected community college to attend the programs they chose.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Policymakers must recognize the diversity of the welfare population, and the variety of approaches and time frames necessary to achieve self-sufficiency. This diversity includes those who have disabilities and a level of personal, family, physical and mental health problems that will not be addressed by purely educational or short term solutions.**

Accordingly, service providers and adult education programs should be encouraged to respond to the variety of educational and work readiness needs of public assistance recipients, allowing those who need more time to enter the workforce to engage in the lower rung activities developed by Project Match. For those who want to work immediately, program models such as America Works can link those with entry level skills to jobs and then monitor their post placement adjustment. Such workers should be made aware of any continuing education opportunities available to them, as union or community members, within their workplaces, or in local schools and community colleges. Those who seek work but lack entry level skills should be able to choose programs, like those of the Center for Employment Training, with strong links to employers and community development efforts and with program activities that bypass traditional skills assessments in favor of simulated on the job learning.

- **Public assistance recipients who lack basic skills and would like to attend education and training programs full time should be encouraged to do so, and the programs they attend should feature a variety of ways to prepare for work.**

For example, ESL students who have education and training from their countries of origin can, with ESL instruction, enter the labor market at a higher than entry level job. For this population, the chance to learn English on an intensive full-time basis for a 6-20 week period can result in relatively good employment opportunities. Without the additional needs for work readiness or job training, they can achieve self-sufficiency relatively quickly.

- **Policymakers can best support the employment of those who lack basic skills and/or a GED by:**

  1. **Including hours of attendance in ESL, GED and ABE classes in the number of hours participants are required to work.**

  2. **Scheduling and locating additional work assignments so that they do not interfere with an individual's ability to continue in the education program they have chosen.**

  3. **Allowing those education sites that would like to be worksites to design work activities for students that reinforce and correspond to their developing literacy and/or English language skills.**

  4. **Supporting participation in education with payment of training related expenses, such as lunch, carfare and child care costs.**

  5. **Recognizing that time limits on participation in education can be counterproductive to both individuals who are close to achieving a credential with a demonstrated labor market payoff, such as a postsecondary certificate or degree and to those who have low literacy and English language skills and lack GEDs. Flexibility and the opportunity to obtain individual waivers under terms agreed to by educators and social service agencies should be encouraged.**

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

6. Education is key to the labor market success of individuals, although such success is limited by available opportunities for employment and education, by institutionalized race and gender discrimination, and the lack of affordable quality child care. It is in the interest of all stakeholders, government, employers, workers and educators, that adults be prepared for jobs at other than the already saturated entry level. Both policy, practice and interagency linkages should encourage participants to reach the highest levels of education they seek.

Those who want to enroll in college programs, are accepted by such programs and demonstrate progress in their work should be allowed to continue. In so doing, they are demonstrating many of the same 'work readiness" behaviors that workfare aims to instill, while preparing for entry into the labor market at a higher level than would otherwise be possible. As the research reviewed here shows, when public assistance recipients find work at other than entry level jobs, they are more likely to secure permanent employment at wage and benefit levels that enable them to become self sufficient. Policy that encourages this avoids worsening the low wage job market by further depressing wages, and helps ensure that entry level jobs will be available for those who need them. If we approach welfare reform from a systemic workforce development perspective, rather than as a way to change the behavior of individuals, we can design policy that addresses a number of national labor market issues simultaneously.

- **Given the relatively poor record of labor market outcomes for training, as opposed to education, training programs should make use of the pedagogies and practices developed by educators and be linked to systems of comprehensive training and education. These systems would provide individuals with a variety of options for combining work and education, whether concurrently or sequentially.**

Such systems can be created through linking the components of workforce development identified by Jurmo (1996): school to work activities; job placement programs for the unemployed and welfare recipients; basic skills education and technical training for unemployed youth and adults; and basic skills education, workplace literacy and training and upgrading programs for incumbent workers. The range of individuals served can be broadened through additional linkages with Head Start, Even Start, America Reads and new initiatives designed to make college more accessible. Such a system presents itself to individuals as a flexible ladder of education and work, and activities directed toward these, which they may enter and exit in a variety of ways. From this perspective, the ladder combines the incremental activities recommended by Project Match with the training and education system described by Grubb.

- **Policymakers can support the creation of comprehensive, accessible and affordable training and education systems by fostering direction and funding at the federal level, creating infrastructural support at the state level and providing mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation at the local level.**

As Herr and Halpern point out, the Family Support Act forced a change in inter-agency relations, requiring coordination among welfare, education, housing and social service sectors that had previously operated in relative isolation from each other. As this report has documented, inter-agency relations became more cooperative under JOBS, despite recurring philosophical and programmatic differences. New federal initiatives directed toward increasing access to education at many levels need to include adult basic education as an integral part of such agendas.

- **As stakeholders in workforce development and regional development form closer linkages to address issues of education and employment, mechanisms for tying labor market returns to educational investments need to be identified. Ways of holding employers accountable for public and private investment in a more literate and skilled workforce are necessary if training and education systems are to succeed.**

ACORN (Association for Community Reform Now) has taken action to ensure that companies that receive incentives in exchange for promising jobs in the communities in which they are located actually hire residents. Workfare workers in New York City are beginning to organize for wages and working conditions equal to those of paid workers at whose side they labor. Increasing unionization is one way of pushing welfare reform in the direction of the high road. Linking employers into regional training and education systems would constitute a proactive approach. Employers and providers could work together to custom train pre-screened public assistance recipients who would have assurances of jobs with viable wages at the end of training.

- **Essential to the operation and conceptualization of statewide training and education systems are two fundamental perspectives:**

  1) Policy design and implementation must include the participation of both service providers and public assistance recipients. Without such input, the latter are reduced to the role of victim in the policies that affect their lives. The resulting policies are impoverished without the reality check provided by those who best know the obstacles to their implementation and who have experienced the results of failed policies many times over. Excluding public assistance recipients from the debate over welfare reform policy also exacerbates the social divisions that result from the false public image of recipients created by others. Such racial, class and gender biases, in turn, worsen the obstacles that recipients face as job seekers.

  2) Public Assistance recipients are not, for the most part, different from the working population, particularly the working poor. What all workers and would-be workers need are opportunities for jobs at living wages and for education that helps them to advance as far as their aspirations and abilities will take them. Nowhere is this clearer, and the result of our tendency to separate populations more ironic, than situations in which former public workers receive workfare assignments at their old job sites. These cases function as the clearest examples of the fallacy that what public assistance recipients need is work experience, and support the claims of those who see workfare as circumventing the employment of union workers at union wages. From the perspective of workforce development, they represent extreme underutilization of skills and experience.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- **Access to quality day care and health care is absolutely essential for the single mothers and their children who comprise the majority of recipients of AFDC.**

As with decisions regarding educational strategies, we can chose the high road or the low road. Quality, affordable child care in public day care centers is currently in short supply. The low cost option being proposed is unregulated care, or babysitting. Yet, the need for child care, viewed from the perspective of workforce development or of a system that supports lifelong learning, presents an opportunity for agencies and organizations to join forces in creating both stable jobs with career ladders and quality care that prepares children for school. The expansion of public day care, Head Start programs and licensed trained family care providers who have access to continuing staff development and education would both relieve worries about the fate of thousands of children left to unregulated care and create employment opportunities for women on public assistance. If family care providers are organized into cooperatives, run by community based organizations or teachers' unions, they can have access to ongoing supervision and staff development, guaranteed wages and benefits, and educational opportunities. In New York City, for example, a union program to train dislocated health care workers will develop such a relationship with a network of the family care providers they train. These women will be supervised by the union's child care fund, and will have access to staff development, health benefits, and a guaranteed minimum income.

The need for child care and the demands of parenting also complicate the suggestion that mothers on public assistance should work and attend school at night, as so many others have done, in order to support their families and further their education. If mothers do this, can they be effective parents? If child care is available, will they be able to afford night and daytime child care? A better solution for the family as a whole would be to allow the mother to continue her education on a full or part time basis while caring for her children herself the remainder of the time.

JOB CREATION

- **Without at least some job creation, the welfare reform initiative is doomed to fail, and to disappoint and impoverish the thousands of individuals who faithfully execute the required steps toward employment and never find jobs. The resulting waste of human talent, effort and public investment is unacceptable from the standpoint of economic development. Job creation can position individuals to rebuild the infrastructure of cities, to assist struggling families, and to meet other critical social**

and economic needs. Job creation could provide clear outcomes for work experience program participants and direct their workfare into job training for real jobs.

RESEARCH

In order to support the formation of effective education and training systems and to ensure that such systems have the capacity to serve individuals at the program level, researchers need to develop data and theory at two levels.

- **We need to understand the development, operation and outcomes of successful workforce development and training and education systems at regional and state levels. How do such systems achieve active participation among stakeholders, facilitate the identification of shared goals, and function to operationalize these goals? What resources and incentives on the part of state and federal government encourage the development of such systems? How do local level agencies become part of state, regional and community development and workforce education and training systems, as full partners?**

- **We need program level studies that use ethnographic and qualitative methods to capture the ways in which program philosophy, goals, curricula, structure, class scheduling and teacher pay, benefits and staff development, operate to achieve desired outcomes.**

Case study methods and participant research can fill the void that exists between the experiential and anecdotal evidence of student progress that literacy practitioners have, on the one hand, and the quantitative measures that fail to capture what they know, on the other. Such studies should identify methods and measures over the short and long term that document what works, with whom, for how long and why. Program level studies should also be done to look at the mechanisms through which interagency linkages work and don't work from the perspectives of both clients and providers.

CONCLUSION

> ***America has always believed itself to be a country where a dedicated, hard-working person could get a decent job that pays a livable wage. The theme of economic opportunity fuels our conscious sense of what is fair and what is possible in America. Yet not only is this notion far from the truth, but also it is becoming more so each day. Income inequalities between the rich and the poor have never been so disparate, and the ranks of the poor have never been so full. Close to 15 percent of the U.S. population-39.3 million people-now live below the poverty line.. . .The major cause of this increased inequality has been a shift in labor demand favoring more educated workers (Clark and Dawson, 1995:4).***

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This report reviews what we know about moving poor individuals who depend on public assistance for survival into the workforce, and more importantly, into positions of self-sufficiency with some chance of advancement. Given the context of growing income and wage inequality, and the nature and limit of entry level job opportunities, education constitutes the last best hope for individuals on public assistance who lack basic literacy, English language skills or a GED. Adult education has been historically under funded and overlooked, but its practitioners have demonstrated remarkable resilience and renewed commitment to their constituents as welfare reform has unfolded.

The field will need both additional resources and many partners as it responds to the Personal Responsibility Act. The learners in its programs will need flexible interpretations of state and federal guidelines as they seek education to attain employment. They will need to have an increased voice in the policy that dramatically affects their lives and plans, and many allies to support them as they contend with persistent obstacles to their success. Such individuals have made and continue to make enormous changes in their own lives. It is up to all of us to make the changes in education and training, in economic and political policies, and in human values that will support their efforts.

Reference Cited

Clark, Peggy and Steven L. Dawson
1995 Jobs and the Urban Poor: Privately Initiated Sectoral Strategies. Washington D.C.: Aspen Institute.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ABLE: Adult Basic Literacy Exam. An untimed standardized test used to assess literacy.

ABE: Adult basic education. This term usually refers to low level, or pre-GED literacy.

ADA: Average daily attendance. A figure often used as basis for the amount of funding a program receives.

AFDC: Aid to families with dependent children. Refers to the welfare entitlement program that was ended with the 1996 passage of the Personal Responsibility Act, and which provided aid primarily to single mothers and their children.

BEGIN: Begin Employment, Gain Independence Now. New York City's JOBS program, featuring conjoined education and work experience.

CBO-Community based organization.

CCP: Community College of Philadelphia.

CET: The Center for Employment Training. A highly successful comprehensive model for training individuals with low literacy or English language fluency and few job skills. The program features open exit and entry without testing requirements and connections to employers fostered through the community development role of the Center.

CSR: Customer service representative. Sometimes used to refer to staff of agencies that administer welfare reform and who interact regularly with clients.

CWEP: Community Women's Education Project: A Philadelphia program that works with the local Private Industry Council to provide adult education for public assistance recipients. Notable features are an expressly feminist, multicultural and activist approach to teaching and learning, and an advocacy role in the community.

DSS: Department of Social Services. State level administering agency for public assistance in New York and California.

EDGE: Education for Gainful Employment. New York State's JOBS program.

ESL: English as a Second language. English language instruction for non-native speakers.

ESW: Education social workers. California Department of Social Service employees who worked with education providers and clients under JOBS.

GAIN: Greater Avenues to Independence. California's JOBS program.

GED: General Educational Development. Widely umderstood as a high school equivalency diploma.

HRA: Human Resources Administration. Agency responsible for administration of public assistance in New York City.

JOBS: Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program. The federal welfare to work program from 1988 to 1996. A result of the 1988 Family Support Act, this program mandated education for those without high school diplomas.

JTPA: Job Training Partnership Act. Funds training programs for disadvantaged adults (including public assistance recipients (Title II) and dislocated workers (Title III).

MDRC: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. Non-profit social science reasearch organization that conducts studies of education and employment related programs, often under contract to state and federal departments or agencies.

NALS: National Adult Literacy Survey.

OES: Office of Employment Services. Responsible for monitoring job search and placement among public assistance recipients in New York City.

PIC: Private Industry Councils. Local dispenser of JTPA funds, this body must be composed of a majority of private sector employers. In Philadelphia, the PIC was also responsible for operating JOBS.

TABE: Test of Adult Basic Education. A timed, standardized test commonly used to measure literacy.

TALS: Test of Applied Literacy Skills. Another timed, standardized test used to measure literacy.

TANF: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. Under the 1996 Personal Responsibility Act, this aid, delivered to states in block grants, replaces AFDC. The assistance provided is for limited time periods only.

VABE: Vocational Adult Basic Education. Combination of literacy instruction and job training.

WEP: Work Experience Program. Commonly known as workfare, WEP is work done by a public assistance recipient at an assigned job site for a specified number of hours in exchange for benefits.

*U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1998-437-627/80673

National Institute for Literacy
800 Connecticut Ave. NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006

*To order more copies of
this publication, call:*
1-800-228-8813

BEST COPY AVAILABLE